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VARIATIONS IN THE STYLE AND CONTENT OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, AND IN THE DIVISION OF AUTHORITY AMONG DIFFERING SOCIAL-STRUCTURAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS WERE STUDIED. DATA INCLUDED OBSERVATION OF MEETINGS, INTERVIEWS, AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNITY PRESS. THE RESEARCH SITES SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY WERE FOUR SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS. DISCUSSIONS WERE INCLUDED FOR THE (1) COMMUNITY CONTEXTS AND POLITICAL DEMANDS, (2) INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF DEMANDS, (3) DECISION-MAKING FORM, (4) AUTHORITY RELATIONSHIPS AND THE DIVISION OF LABOR, AND (5) CONTENTS AND OUTPUTS OF THE POLICY PROCESS. THE FINDINGS INDICATED THAT GENERALLY VARIATIONS IN DECISION-MAKING CHARACTERISTICS IN THE SAMPLE SCHOOL SYSTEMS WERE RELATED TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMUNITY AND TO CERTAIN STATUS-RELATED COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS. (RS)

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EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING IN SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

Cooperative Research Project No. 2440

David W. Minar

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Evanston, Illinois

1966

The research reported herein was supported by the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

PREFACE

This study of the politics of local school systems grew out of a dual interest in community government and the function of education, fueled by a general curiosity about the political life of the suburbs. It followed a mass data study of school system elections and referenda that uncovered systematic relationships between social structure, electoral behavior, and certain systemic properties in a sample of 48 suburban districts. The results raised questions about whether and how these effects might extend into the school decision-making process. Hence this, a comparative examination of decision-making and related matters in four districts selected from the earlier sample so as to control for social and electoral characteristics.

The merits of a four-case comparison are of course limited. Both these limitations and the reasons for restricting the number of cases are discussed in the body of the report. It is our hope, nonetheless, that there is something here of value both about education and about politics. This is one of a relatively small but growing number of intensive studies of the making of school decisions carried out by people with primary disciplinary identifications outside the education field. It is an attempt to bring some of the methods and concepts of political science to the study of this particular species of local political systems. Inevitably, it also brings along some of their difficulties.

Many people have cooperated in the research on which this report is based. It owes primarily to the contract support of the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education. A major debt is also owed the school board members, superintendents, other school personnel, and

private citizens who spent time and effort with members of the project staff. Without exception they were gracious and open, and they extended to us the hospitality of their board meetings and took an active interest in the project. Without their cooperation our research would have been impossible, but assurances of confidence prohibit our naming names.

R. J. Snow and Chester B. Rogers each served one year as principal project assistant, and contributed much in theory, instrument design, interviewing, and data analysis. Particular note should be taken of the complementary study by Mr. Snow comparing school and municipal systems in the sample communities. He has utilized well the materials collected for this project, and he has added much to our study both of data and of insight. His work is separately reported in R. J. Snow, Local Experts, Their Roles as Conflict Managers in Municipal and Educational Government (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Northwestern University, 1966).

Others to whom our grateful appreciation for research assistance is due include Mrs. Pamela Wilcox, George Marcus, Jonathan West, Walda Cornnell, and Mrs. Carola Minar. Mrs. Edith Kramer, as project secretary, has performed a great variety of tasks, big and small, with equanimity, grace, and efficiency. Mrs. Jane C. Taylor has been helpful in many ways, but especially in the typing of the final report.

In addition, many colleagues have contributed, directly and indirectly, to the efforts that have gone into this project. Particular mention should be made of the support and suggestions of Richard C. Snyder, Scott Greer, Lee F. Anderson, Michael Usdan, and Kenneth Janda.

All responsibility, of course, rests with the principal investigator.

David W. Minar

Evanston, Illinois
July, 1966

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CHAPTER I

NATURE, SCOPE, AND TECHNIQUES OF THE STUDY

Recent years have seen the rapid growth of interest in the political aspects of public education. In a basic sense the process of running the schools is no more political than it has been before, but as public interest and investment in education has increased, as the scale of school organization has grown, and as the society itself has become more complex, it has been ever easier to see the school system as a system of government. Decisions about education are, after all, decisions that dispose of more public financial resources and account for more public employment than those in any other sector of activity except national defense. Hence it is no surprise that people interested in the problems and processes of government are turning a greater share of their attention to education. In many respects education is the nation's number one industry, and its importance seems more likely to increase than to decrease in the future.

The research reported in these pages represents an effort to understand the workings of local school districts as political systems. Its underlying purposes are two-fold: to clarify some of the characteristics of the processes through which schools are governed at the local level; and, through use of school systems as laboratories, to investigate some of the general features of community political processes in contemporary American society. It should be emphasized that this is not an attempt to examine all aspects either of school politics or of community government. Nonetheless, its goal is to see major aspects of the school system from the same sort of framework that might be used in the analysis of any local policy-making jurisdiction, while at the same time giving attention to those particular features that may differentiate education from other local governmental services.

It seems unnecessary to dwell at length here on the ways in which local school systems qualify as systems of political action.[1] Legally, like other local jurisdictions, they are subunits of the states, partaking of delegated state powers through structures and within limits prescribed by state constitutions and legislatures.[2] They have fixed territories, constituencies, legislative bodies, administrative officers, and bureaucracies like other units of government. They are, for the most part, legitimized by democratic procedures of various kinds, as our political culture requires of local political organs. They are expected to serve the people and to be responsive to popular needs. They tax and spend public resources. To be sure, school districts are not generalized in function, but neither, in truth, are municipalities. As the public image of the educational function has grown, and as the society has taken on a more complex urban character, the schools have found themselves dealing with a broader clientele and a larger set of responsibilities. It can easily be argued that there is no major aspect of today's society that does not bear in some way on the work of the educational system. In a generic sense (i.e., apart from the particular differentiations of legal rules and behavior in specific places) perhaps the only important distinctions between school systems and other units of local government are the narrower range of functions of the former and the fact that the school system is not specifically charged with maintaining the public order that holds the community together. Beyond these reservations, there seem to be no basic reasons why the school district cannot be treated in the terms applicable to other political organizations operating on the local level.

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[1] On the politics of public education generally, see Thomas H. Eliot, "Toward an Understanding of Public School Politics," American Political Science Review, LIII (December, 1959), 1032-1043; Roscoe C. Martin, Government and the Suburban School ("The Economics and Politics of Public Education, 2;" Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962); Robert C. Cahill and Stephen P. Hencley, eds., The Politics of Education in the Local Community (Danville, Ill.: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1964); and Russell T. Gregg, "Political Dimensions of Educational Administration," Teachers College Record, Vol. LXVIII, No. 2 (November, 1961), 118-128.

[2] On the politics of education at the state level, see esp. Stephen K. Bailey, et al., Schoolmen and Politics: A Study of State Aid to Education in the Northwest ("The Economics and Politics of Public Education, 1;" Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962); and Nicholas A. Masters, Robert H. Salisbury, and Thomas H. Eliot, State Politics and the Public Schools: An Exploratory Analysis (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1964).

The character of the community political process.--The concepts and perspectives used in contemporary social science to analyze community politics are, of course, many and varied. Over the last decade especially, the scholarship of political science and sociology has been much concerned with the character of community political structure and the proper methodology with which to approach it.[3] These questions have been the subject of some of social science's most lively debates. While this is not the place to enter these controversies, it seems appropriate here to clarify the framework used to hold together the analysis that follows.

Basically, perhaps the approach of this work can best be summarized as having four characteristics: (1) It is in some sense sociological, i.e., it emphasizes the conditioning effect of social structure on the political system. (2) It rests on an "input-output" model of political processes, though it is without some of the implications often associated with "systems analysis." (3) Its underlying assumptions lean more toward a pluralistic than an elitist view of what is likely to be found in the local community. (4) It is to a degree eclectic, employing techniques and concepts that are usually associated with several approaches to the study of politics.[4]

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[3] Nelson W. Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963); Edward C. Banfield, *Political Influence* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1961); Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953); Robert E. Agger, Daniel Goldrich, and Bert E. Swanson, *The Rulers and the Ruled* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964); Stephen P. Hencley, "The Study of Community Politics and Power," in Robert S. Cahill and Stephen P. Hencley, eds., *The Politics of State Education in the Local Community* (Danville, Ill.: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1964), 5-25; and Thomas J. Anton, "Power, Pluralism, and Local Politics," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. VII (March, 1963), 425-457.

To be more explicit, a political system is seen here as a societal device charged with settling conflicts and redistributing resources by making authoritative rules of behavior. By authoritative rules we mean statements generally recognized as legitimate. The political system can be analyzed into three component parts--context, political process, and policy. Context is the social undergirding of politics, the larger whole of which a political system is a part. The substance of politics, the forms and contents through and on which it works, are reflections of this larger whole, which in turn is acted upon by the political system in intended and unintended ways. It is convenient to think of the context itself as having two aspects, which we will call social structure and political culture. The former term we will use to refer to the "objective" features of the society, i.e., to such characteristics as the distribution of roles, statuses, and resources. Thus social structure is described by indicators of income, occupation, sex, age, residence, and the like. Political culture, on the other hand, we will use to refer to the bundle of values, attitudes, customs, habits, and shared subjective outlooks on the character of the political system. A constitution may be thought of as an embodiment or codification of a political culture insofar as it actually serves as a guide to collective political behavior.

What are the contributions of context to the political process? How does it make itself felt? Fundamentally, they would seem to be two: demands, and limitations. Demands, arising out of tensions in the social structure, are cues to action in the political system, the signals on which the system strains to perform its societal functions. This is not to say that the system acts on all cues or reads them correctly, but only that they serve as activators of the public-regarding acts the political process embodies. The culture is the source of another kind of guideline to political action, prescriptions of the forms and limits of governmental activity. The "structures" through which politics is channeled, the institutions that give it lasting shape, the inhibitions that prevent it from departing far from accepted usage are embedded in the culture, in habituated ways of doing and looking at things.

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[4] David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965); This model resembles in some features the elaborate one discussed by David Easton in A Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965); Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., The Politics of Developing Areas (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1960).

The political process itself, as we shall treat it here, is the convergence of these societal forces. It is the site of political activity narrowly defined, the point where demands and limits are reconciled and where policy outputs are formulated and stated in authoritative terms. Three activities comprise the process: demand aggregation, institutionalization, and decision-making. As demand aggregation, we include the development, accumulation, and transmission of all claims upon the political system addressed to system action, whether these come from the community, from sources external to the system, or from actors in the political process themselves. Institutionalization refers to that part of the process directed toward the structure of the process, i.e., toward the establishment or revision of regularized political routines. Thus the reform of procedures, the establishment of offices, matters having to do with the bureaucracy are activities that fall in this category.

Decision-making is the central category of activity in the entire political process, insofar, at least, as that process has to do with the formulation of public policy. The analysis of decision-making is a subject in itself, the focus of a great deal of discussion in the social science literature.[5] Our concern here is with the steps through which demands are processed and either turned aside or converted into authoritative policy statements. A simple approach to decision-making, and one that we will in general follow here, is to describe it as a series of actions leading through the interpretation and presentation of demands, delineation of alternatives, development of information about the consequences of following alternative courses of policy, and the making of choice itself. These steps follow some original impetus to action and may or may not issue in some explicit policy output directed toward the change of behavior.

The focus of the present study.--The above paragraphs simply describe a set of categories through which the processes of political organization and action may be viewed. These will, in general, guide our treatment of school government in the chapters that follow. The phenomena of politics, of course, vary from system to system and from time to time. Thus the character of any portion of the political system is problematic: there are alternative modes of condition and action to be found in any of the categories outlined here. Basically, the task set out for our research is to describe school systems in terms of these categories and search for systematic patterns of variation among them.

The project reported here is, of necessity, somewhat more confined in scope than these terms might suggest. It is focussed on the decision-making process and in particular on certain aspects of that process. While it touches in one way or another on nearly all the phases of school politics, it is not an attempt to develop a comprehensive picture or to present evidence about a wide range of variations in system characteristics. Despite the generality of perspective with which it has been introduced, this work is by no means intended to be a general discussion of school government.

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[5] Richard C. Snyder, "A Decision-Making Approach to the Study of Political Phenomena," in Roland Young, ed., Approaches to the Study of Politics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1958); and Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics (Princeton: Organizational Behavior Section, Princeton University, 1954).

Specifically, the project was designed to seek answers to the question, what variations in the style and content of the decision-making process and in the division of authority are to be found among school systems whose social-structural contexts differ? The question was pursued through comparison of four suburban elementary school districts in Cook County, Illinois. The theoretical and empirical base for this research was laid by an earlier extensive study of school politics in a sample of 48 elementary districts in the Cook County area. In that study, voting data were gathered on board elections and bond and tax referenda for the five-year period 1958-62. From these data indicators were developed for each community of level of popular participation and level of dissent on referenda and elections. These were then run against aggregate socio-economic characteristics, school system characteristics, and selected and limited features of the decision-making system. A more detailed account of the procedures and findings of the earlier project may be found in Appendix A to this report.[6]

Analysis of the data described revealed substantial relationships in the sample districts among the three major variables investigated, namely, collective electoral behavior, socio-economic characteristics, and decision-making. Generally speaking, districts with high levels of voter participation were also those with high levels of dissent, i.e., high proportions of votes cast for losers in board elections and high proportions of "no" votes in referenda. These also tended to be districts low on aggregate indicators of social status, including family income, education, and occupation. Some social characteristics, including urbanism, mobility, and size of district, bore no significant relationship to political behavior. Districts with low levels of dissent (and participation) were likely to be communities of high status and also places where candidates for board positions are nominated by caucuses, these being employed in half the communities in the sample.

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[6] David W. Minar, "School Community, and Politics in Suburban Areas," in B. J. Chandler, et al., eds., Education in Urban Society (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1962), pp. 90-104; David W. Minar, "Community Characteristics, Conflict, and Power Structures," in Cahill and Hencley, op. cit., pp. 125-143; and David W. Minar, "The Community Basis of Conflict in School System Politics," (ditto; Center for Metropolitan Studies, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, n.d.).

Interviews with superintendents turned up certain limited but revealing evidence about processes of decision-making in these districts. In low conflict, high status districts it appeared that superintendents had a great deal of latitude for independent action. Boards in such places were inclined to validate the superintendent's actions and to be concerned chiefly with broad policy issues. Boards in the high conflict, low status districts, on the other hand, were more often described by superintendents as hard to work with and likely to meddle in "administrative" matters.

A hypothetical explanation of this association between propensity to conflict on the electoral level, social characteristics, and organizational styles links them through what we have called resources of conflict management skills. These we suppose to be associated with certain kinds of occupational and educational patterns and to consist of perspectives and experiences that prize specialization, division of labor, delegation of authority, and technical expertise. Low conflict communities, more plentiful in these resources, are those better able to suppress conflict in the electoral process and develop mechanisms for low-friction control of the entire governing activity. Rival hypotheses are plausible, but in the face of the evidence do not seem equally so.

Against this background, the present study was conceived to push the line of inquiry a step further. This stage of research has consisted of intensive examination of the political process in four school districts selected so as to vary certain aggregate community characteristics. As indicated above, the focus falls on limited aspects of decision-making, though descriptive material on other phases of politics in these communities has also been gathered. Essentially, however, we are interested in the ways in which low conflict-high status places and high conflict-low status places conduct their school business, in the techniques, devices, procedures, relationships, and contents that distinguish the work of school boards and administrations in these kinds of communities. These questions may be summarized in terms of two general concepts: style of decision-making and division of labor.

By style we mean the manner in which the decision-making process is conducted. Styles may be more or less regularized, more or less formal, more or less hostile. Boards may operate on a more or less open basis, with participation by a wide or narrow range of people. They may give attention intensively or extensively, devote themselves to large policy questions or to small matters of detail. A more detailed set of sub-categories will be set out below as we present data.

Division of labor is a narrower and more concise concept, and also one in more common use.[7] Basically, the problem here is who does what in the governmental process. In school government, given the legal and traditional framework in which it operates, the problem of division of labor is essentially a question of the respective relationships of board and administration to the various aspects of decision-making. The authority of the two are differently derived, that of the board coming from the legitimizing device of democratic elections, that of the superintendent from his professional qualifications and practical operating responsibilities. They may be described as formal and technical (or expert) authority roles. While their legal relationship is clear, their relationship in operating behavior may vary over a wide range, from all-but-complete dominance by the board on the one hand to all-but-complete dominance by the superintendent on the other.

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[7] Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason, and Alexander McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis: Studies of the School Superintendency Role (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958); and Neal Gross, Who Runs Our Schools? (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958).

With only four cases in our sample, we are in no position to test hypotheses or generalize findings. However, to make more explicit the theoretical framework of the research discussed in the chapters to follow, we might give some advance indication of the nature of relationships we would expect to find between community structure and decision-making system. On the basis of what was said above, i.e., on the supposition that some districts bring conflict management skills to bear on school affairs and some do not, we anticipated differences in style and division of labor as follows.

Low conflict, high status districts: less formal procedures, more done on basis of implicit understandings; wider participation in decision-making; more attention to broad policy, less to detail; more latitude for decision and independent action by superintendent; less time devoted to district work by board members; more discussion by board of curriculum and community relations, less of finance, personnel, and administration.

High conflict, low status districts: more formalized procedures, more attention to written policies; restricted participation; divided votes;

more attention to detail, less to broad issues; narrower range or latitude for action by superintendent; more board discussion of finance, personnel, less of curriculum, community relations.

Generally speaking, these predictions have been borne out by our research, though with a number of qualifications. These will be noted and, where possible, explained in the substantive chapters that follow.

Selection of research sites.--The communities used in this study were, as we have noted previously, four suburban Cook County elementary school districts. Selection of these districts requires explanation of two kinds, one having to do with the choice of the universe from which they were drawn, the other with the choice of specific districts for this sample.

The schools of Cook County are, of course, organized and governed under Illinois school law. In most ways the suburban districts have characteristics typical of those found in most American metropolitan areas. The major exception to this statement is that in Cook County outside Chicago elementary and secondary schools are run by separate jurisdictions. Thus the districts with which we are dealing are responsible for K - 8 education only. These districts also tend to be small in size, there being 125 of them in an area with a total 1960 population of 623,011. The secondary school districts ordinarily combine several elementary systems.

These districts are basically remnants of the rural past of the areas they serve. For the most part they were sparsely populated until after the Second World War, although a few did serve sizeable old suburbs or country towns. Now, however, they are either thoroughly developed or rapidly nearing that point, the metropolitan frontier of the Chicago area having passed the county boundaries some time ago. Some of these districts were manufactured in the school consolidation movement pushed vigorously in Illinois during the early 1950's, but most of them have had their present geographic shapes for several decades.

In terms of organization and powers the school systems of the area seem quite representative of "classic" American practice. They are charged with providing free public education according to the rather broad standards set down by the legislature and state Superintendent of Public Instruction. In actuality they have much discretionary power. They hire and fire certificated and non-certificated personnel, adopt textbooks, set curriculum, construct and maintain facilities, and perform a variety of other peripheral community functions. They levy taxes within rate maxima fixed by the legislature, though increases in tax rates require referendum approval. Assessment and tax collection functions are performed by county and township offices. School districts themselves may borrow money on tax anticipation warrants and float capital improvement bonds, the latter with the consent of the voters.

The Illinois school districts with which we are concerned are totally independent from other local units of government (i.e., below the county level) except that formal title to school property is held by township school trustees. They are in no formal way responsible to the cities and villages whose territory and constituencies they share. In fact, only three of the elementary school districts in the suburban area of the county are coterminous with municipalities, a situation that raises some interesting questions about the meaning and political identity of "community" in the suburbs.[8]

By dint of their common relationship to Illinois law, all the districts in this area are identical in formal structure at the top level. (This is not true of all school districts in the state.) The basic authority rests with a board of seven members elected at large by the citizenry of the district for three-year staggered terms. The board selects from among its number a president, and all boards also appoint a professional superintendent who is in charge of administration of the district's schools. Beyond this, little is required in the way of structure proper, although some procedures are prescribed by state law in respect to operations and reporting. Below the board-superintendent level, then, districts are open to create organizations that suit their own particular needs and tastes, and a considerable amount of variation is found among them.

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[8] Minar, "School, Community, and Politics in Suburban Areas," op. cit.

As their location in one state conditions the characteristics of the school systems we are studying, so does the fact that they are elementary districts located in the suburbs of a large metropolitan area. Without comparative data we are not able to go very far toward saying how elementary districts might differ from secondary or "unit" (K - 12) districts. A few differences are obvious, however. Elementary systems deal with a less complex program, a program that includes fewer specialties. They are probably under less pressure to "produce" in terms of objective criteria such as college admissions. They serve a less sophisticated student clientele, and therefore experience fewer student pressures (of the kind that may arise out of student government, large-scale inter-school sports, etc.) and fewer difficult behavior problems. In practice, though not of necessity, they tend also to be organized into smaller individual school units. Beyond these considerations there is little reason to believe that elementary school systems confront problems radically different in their demands on the decision-making process.

The use of strictly suburban school districts as subjects of study raises questions somewhat more complicated. While much has been written about suburbia as a social phenomenon, it is not clear that much is known about "suburban-ness" in general as a creator of distinctive political effects.[9] One thing is certain: there is a great deal of variation on social and political characteristics among the suburbs of most metropolitan areas.[10] It seems doubtful that the fact of suburban location is in itself a matter of great importance. With the decentralization of industry and trade, even commuting no longer follows a simple pattern of suburb-central city and return.

Some characteristics do, however, tend to distinguish the social structure of the suburbs from that of the central city. Among the more apparent factors might be mentioned smaller size, more homogeneity of population by nearly all criteria, more homogeneity of economic activity, less density, higher fertility, fewer working women, higher aggregate social rank, newer public and private physical plant, lower proportions of ethnics in the population. The ethnic factor is a particularly crucial one. Although the Chicago metropolitan area, for example, does contain a few non-white suburbs, most are nearly without non-white residents. Thus the modal suburban situation is one in which school segregation is not a subject of policy discussion, a most significant distinction from the central city at the present time. In yet other ways suburbs differ, too, from rural areas and "independent" towns, i.e., towns geographically outside the metropolitan orbit.[11]

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[9] Robert C. Wood, Suburbia: Its People and Their Politics (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959); Scott Greer, The Emerging City: Myth and Reality (New York: The Free Press, 1962); Scott Greer, Governing the Metropolis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962).

[10] Robert C. Wood and Vladimir V. Almendinger, 1400 Governments: The Political Economy of the New York Metropolitan Region (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961).

[11] Otis D. Duncan and Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Social Characteristics of Urban and Rural Communities (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1956); Otis D. Duncan, et al., Metropolis and Region (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960).

It cannot be claimed that the suburbs present "typical" social, political, or educational situations, for work remains to be done that will indicate how much the findings of suburban research can be generalized to other kinds of communities. There are, however, a number of reasons for siting research on school politics in suburban areas. From the point of view of research design, the suburbs offer many comparable units within a relatively compact geographic spread. By this token they allow for constancy in some social and political characteristics (e.g., region and perhaps legal structure) and thus reduce the complexity of the research problem. Suburbs also bulk large in the total American community picture, for they continue to increase in size while most of the central cities and the hinterlands lose population. Metropolis dwellers (defined by the standards of the Census Bureau) now comprise about two-thirds of all Americans, and over half of these reside in suburban areas. Furthermore, suburban areas have often been in the lead in educational innovation, perhaps because they tend to be affluent and changing. The point is that whether they are typical or not, suburbs are important in the educational and political picture, and they have many characteristics that make them admirable laboratories for community research.[12]

The specific design characteristics of this project follow from the background considerations discussed above. Selection of a sample of school districts from the Cook County suburban area automatically controlled some variables, particularly formal authority structure, legal powers and procedures, and culture in a broad sense. With respect to the last of these, it is clear that some differences among suburbs might be termed cultural, but at the ordinary level of usage the communities of the Chicago area share what can be called an American midwestern metropolitan cultural framework.

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[12] James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs: A Commentary on Schools in Metropolitan Areas (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961).

Choice of the four districts used for intensive study was governed by the theoretical criteria outlined above, and by some subsidiary practical considerations. The selection was made primarily in terms of positions on the electoral variables examined in the original 48-district study. Thus two districts with records of high dissent in board elections and two with records of low dissent were sought. The high dissent districts were finally chosen to fall in the lower half of the social rank distribution, the low dissent districts from among those in the upper social rank half. On social rank, the four fall in positions 4, 12, 25, and 37, counting from the top down. Thus the sample was controlled so as to provide a range of variation on the major independent variables, dissent and status; the research problem was to test for correlative variation on the dependent variable, decision-making behavior. The data on which the choice of sample districts was based are reported in Table 1.

Practical matters figuring into the selection of sample districts were three. One was the accessibility of the districts to Northwestern University, the home base of the project. A second was the form of municipal government of the communities studies. This was taken into account to facilitate a related study comparing board-superintendent relationships with relationships between city managers and councils in the same communities. This study, focussing on authority roles, was carried out by one of the research assistants on the present project and has been completed as a Ph.D. dissertation in Northwestern's Department of Political Science.[13]

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[13] R. J. Snow, Local Experts: Their Roles as Conflict Managers in Municipal and Educational Government, (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Political Science, Northwestern University, 1966).

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE AND QUARTILE SCORES ON SOCIAL RANK, ELECTION PARTICIPATION AND DISSENT, REFERENDA PARTICIPATION AND DISSENT, FOR 48 SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, 1958-1962

DIST. NO.	SOCIAL RANK	ED. PART.	ED. DISS.	REF. PART.	REF. DISS.	
1	99	17 (4)	8 (1)	26 (4)	25 (2)	4 DISTRICT
2	99	14 (4)	27 (3)	10 (2)	34 (2)	SAMPLE
3	98	6 (2)	0 (1)	13 (2)	17 (1)	DESIGNATION:
4	95	5 (1)	0 (1)	15 (3)	28 (2)	DISTRICT A
5	93	6 (2)	0 (1)	15 (3)	40 (3)	
6	92	8 (2)	12 (2)	27 (4)	28 (2)	
7	91	12 (3)	21 (2)	41 (4)	40 (3)	
8	88	5 (1)	13 (2)	24 (4)	39 (2)	
9	87	3 (1)	6 (1)	5 (1)	31 (2)	
10	84	5 (1)	8 (2)	6 (1)	34 (2)	
11	83	11 (3)	21 (2)	16 (3)	52 (4)	
12	83	3 (1)	2 (1)	4 (1)	35 (2)	DISTRICT B
13	83	3 (1)	2 (1)	13 (3)	21 (1)	
14	79	9 (2)	0 (1)	15 (3)	30 (2)	
15	75	6 (2)	27 (3)	7 (1)	20 (1)	
16	74	8 (2)	11 (2)	22 (4)	23 (1)	
17	72	3 (1)	0 (1)	6 (1)	19 (1)	
18	72	6 (2)	0 (1)	8 (2)	29 (2)	
19	71	5 (1)	48 (4)	6 (1)	24 (1)	
20	70	6 (2)	17 (2)	12 (2)	46 (3)	
21	68	23 (4)	20 (2)	22 (4)	60 (4)	
22	67	7 (2)	34 (4)	8 (1)	37 (2)	
23	65	11 (3)	22 (3)	11 (2)	49 (3)	
24	63	15 (4)	40 (4)	14 (3)	66 (4)	
25	63	13 (3)	31 (3)	21 (4)	38 (2)	DISTRICT C
26	62	7 (2)	18 (2)	23 (4)	50 (3)	
27	59	14 (3)	17 (2)	6 (1)	16 (1)	
28	58	19 (4)	30 (3)	26 (4)	54 (4)	
29	58	6 (1)	21 (2)	8 (2)	15 (1)	
30	58	2 (1)	0 (1)	5 (1)	13 (1)	
31	57	12 (3)	28 (3)	18 (3)	57 (4)	
32	57	17 (4)	22 (3)	16 (3)	46 (3)	
33	57	12 (3)	47 (4)	12 (2)	62 (4)	
34	55	5 (1)	29 (3)	-- --[a]	-- --	
35	55	8 (2)	18 (2)	12 (2)	45 (3)	
36	54	17 (4)	40 (4)	17 (3)	58 (4)	
37	53	9 (3)	29 (3)	6 (1)	43 (3)	DISTRICT D
38	51	18 (4)	34 (3)	27 (4)	72 (4)	
39	51	9 (3)	35 (4)	12 (2)	50 (3)	
40	50	12 (3)	28 (3)	24 (4)	54 (4)	
41	50	11 (3)	10 (1)	13 (3)	46 (3)	
42	50	10 (3)	41 (4)	12 (2)	36 (2)	
43	46	21 (4)	46 (4)	14 (3)	53 (4)	
44	46	6 (2)	36 (4)	-- --	-- --	
45	46	6 (2)	37 (4)	10 (2)	24 (1)	
46	42	18 (4)	43 (4)	4 (1)	52 (3)	
47	41	29 (4)	29 (3)	43 (4)	57 (4)	
48	34	20 (4)	42 (4)	-- --	-- --	
MEDIAN		8.7	21.65	12.8	39.6	

[a] No referenda were submitted to the voters in these districts during the period studied.

The third practical problem that impinged on the selection of sample districts was cooperation on the part of school personnel. In three of the districts originally drawn in the sample, reception to the study was open and cordial. In the fourth original district the superintendent declined to be interviewed and was clearly unenthusiastic about the prospects of having his system studied. After several attempts to elicit his cooperation, the district was dropped and another added. To some unknown extent this move corrupted the sample, as the fourth district was not so good a fit by the selection criteria. It is interesting to note that the non-cooperative district was the lowest on the status variable and highest on dissent of the four in the subsample. The superintendent's reluctance to participate was apparently based on feelings of insecurity about his relationships with his board. In a roundabout way this experience in itself supports our major hypothesis about such relationships in high dissent districts.[14]

Data collection.--There are no simple prescriptions in social science for understanding decision-making. While the question of research techniques has been much discussed, commitments to a single method have usually grown out of some firm theoretical predisposition. The research reported here was directed toward a broad description of decision processes and institutions, and it was not linked to the notion that some single indicator would yield sufficient evidence. Therefore, a variety of data collection techniques was used, though this is not, of course, to say that they included all available or imaginable techniques. The kinds of material sought are evident in what has been said heretofore and in the substantive discussion in succeeding chapters. Basically, four techniques were utilized: observation of meetings, interviews, content analysis of the community press, and documentary analysis. A summary description of the use made of each seems in order here.

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[14] The information we have on original District D indicates strongly that it is more like sample District C than like D. The latter is idiosyncratic in many ways in terms of our theoretical scheme. More than anything else this probably illustrates the dangers of working with a small sample.

Observation was perhaps the most productive of the methods used. During the summer, fall, and winter of 1965-66 members of the research team regularly attended the board meetings of the sample districts. Three of the districts held public meetings once each month; the fourth held two meetings each month. In total, meetings were observed as follows: District A, 6; District B, 8; District C, 7; District D, 6. The time covered by the observations was essentially a period of "normal business" in the districts. It included adoption of budgets but did not span election time. One district in the sample (District B) held a bond referendum in the winter which turned out to be the occasion of considerable controversy. A second (District C) opened a new school in September, 1965. Otherwise all the systems seemed to be performing at a typical rate without the intrusion of unusual issues.

During the early months of the project the staff undertook the development of an observation instrument for recording meetings, and after discussion and experimentation developed the form described in Appendix B.[15] This form was pretested in two districts outside the study sample and somewhat revised as a result. It has since been used by a number of students for observation done in connection with class work, and by a research assistant in his correlative study of municipal decision-making, as described above.[16]

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[15] See Robert F. Bales, "A Set of Categories for the Analysis of Small Group Interactions," American Sociological Review, XV (April, 1950), 257-63; Robert F. Bales, "Channels of Communication in Small Groups," American Sociological Review, XVI (June, 1951), 461-68; Robert F. Bales, Interaction Process Analysis (Cambridge: Addison Wesley, 1951).

[16] Snow, *op. cit.*

The instrument in the form finally adopted is a simple one that provides for the recording of a running minute of the meeting. Each oral participation in the flow of business was noted by source (participant) and kind (positive comment, information contribution, inquiry, negative comment). Note was also made of the substance of the business at hand (later coded into six subject-matter categories), of the time devoted to each substantive question, and of votes taken. As much as possible, descriptive material on the business conducted, comments and attitudes of participants, procedures, atmosphere, etc., was also written during the meeting. Shortly after each meeting the record was coded and a more subjective analysis of the meeting was dictated by the observer.

The major flaw in this procedure is uncertainty as to reliability. During the first two months, and to a lesser degree thereafter, meetings were observed by two or three staff members and much discussion was devoted to the interpretation of observation categories. The only difficult problem proved to be agreement on kind of participation, though differences on this dimension were progressively narrowed. However, evidence on this matter should be viewed with some skepticism. Otherwise, the observations as described seem to provide a fairly complete and useful account of the official conduct of school district business. There was no reason to believe that the presence of observers contaminated processes in any significant way, and the meetings gave the staff excellent opportunities to talk informally with district personnel and citizens and to develop a "feel," for the school systems and community. It is our general feeling that this sort of technique is underused in social science.

Interviews were taken in each district with three categories of people: superintendents, board members, and community actors interested in schools. A separate schedule was utilized for each group, though with some overlapping items. (See Appendix C for schedules). All schedules were pretested in outside districts. The interview questions were for the most part open-ended, and they sought a variety of personal, school, and community information. Interviews were carried out by the principal investigator, the two graduate assistants, and two graduate and one undergraduate students of community politics. It proved impossible to secure an interview with one board member in District A, and one board interview from District C was substantially unusable. It should be noted that similar interviews were taken with city managers, mayors, councilmen, and municipal influentials in three of the four sample communities, and the records of these have been used by the project staff.

Superintendent and board interviews included two special "Division of Labor" instruments designed to elicit specific comparable data on the distribution of authority across districts. These were adaptations of the devices used by Gross and his associates.[17] They asked for scaled responses to questions about responsibility for certain kinds of school district business. One of these schedules, completed in the presence of the interviewer, described practice in the district as the respondent saw it. The other, left for the respondent to fill out at his leisure and return by mail, asked for opinions about "ideal" arrangements.

Each district's superintendent was interviewed twice, once as the initial step in the district, once in a follow-up just before completion of the project. The initial interviews proved effective means of establishing contact with the districts and introducing the project. The concluding interviews were less structured than the others and were used to fill gaps in information and probe specific questions of interest. Because District A changed superintendents during the study period, these two interviews were held with different incumbents, but the initial information was secured from the retiring one.

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[17] Gross, Explorations in Role Analysis..., op. cit.

Community actors were selected by simplified reputational methods. Each superintendent and board member was asked to name people with influence in the community and to designate those especially interested in educational affairs. Those people who received more than two mentions were put on the interview list. In addition, presidents of the district-wide Parent Teachers Associations and (in the two communities where applicable) presidents of Leagues of Women Voters were interviewed. It was originally planned that names would be added from mentions in the community press, but this source proved barren.

In the last analysis, these methods of selecting community respondents left something to be desired, though we suspect that the problem is more in the phenomenon than in the technique. Those being interviewed generally had difficulty providing concrete answers as to who was "influential," a difficulty that seldom seemed to stem from reluctance to name names. Thus the total number of community interviews was not large (District A, 6; B, 9; C, 8; D, 7). The notion of individual influence in the educational system, beyond that of the formal holders of authority and district employees, seemed hard for respondents to understand. Thus often the query did not "make sense" to them. Two reasons may be suggested for this effect: rejection of "politics" as a framework in which school district affairs can be understood; and absence of individually held power as a significant factor in the districts under study. The nature of the political society of suburbia might in itself contribute to this situation.

One newspaper in each district was read for a five-year period (1960-65). The instructions called for the reader to make note of every item having to do with school affairs except those about individual school class activities or the activities of Parent Teacher Associations in individual schools. These notes were then coded according to subject matter theme and kind of item (article, editorial, letter). The newspapers used were all parts of larger suburban chains, and all are published weekly in tabloid format. In size, scope of coverage, and focus of interest they differ considerably, though none are vigilant editorially. (See Appendix E for description of content categories.)

The results of this phase of the research showed radical differences in school coverage from community to community, as reported in Chapter II below. While not irrelevant, this is more a finding on the suburban press than on suburban schools. Some of the papers in the sample (two, to be more specific), obviously consider the school districts to be fairly significant news. Even these do not cover education extensively if school items are judged as a proportion of the bulk of stories, despite the importance attributed to education as a suburban drawing-card and the proportion of public funds spent by the school systems. However, it is apparent that the publishers or editors responsible for decisions about what to cover and what to print judge the value of school news quite differently from one paper to the other. There is no reason to believe that the difference in volume of published school items can be explained to any significant extent by the existence of "newsworthy" material. If anything, one would on this ground predict that the districts in the sample would reverse their positions. All this is not to say that our analysis of the press is unimportant, for it provides evidence of the flow of communication to the people of the districts and perhaps clues to the social characteristics of the communities with which we are working. It was also valuable in developing community "background" and checking out certain factual materials.

Finally, our research drew on census data, published reports from the districts, statistical information collected by the County Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other scattered documentary sources.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY CONTEXTS AND POLITICAL DEMANDS

This chapter deals with two closely related subjects: the community contexts of the sample districts and the demands that are made upon their school systems. Our basic hypothesis suggests that decision-making will vary with the structure of the community in which a system is set. To some degree this variation is presumably explainable by the differences in the demands the community presents the system. Hence, both the character of the community and the content and mechanisms of the political demand process are fundamental to the comparison of the systems from which our data are drawn.

Variations in socio-economic base.--It would transcend the limits both of feasibility and of relevance to present complete pictures here of the social structures of the four sample communities. In these pages, therefore, we will confine our discussion to a few characteristics that seem particularly salient or of general interest.

Table 2 summarizes a great deal of information about the socio-economic bases and school systems of the four districts. It reveals, as we have indicated earlier, that these places vary radically on a number of central features. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that all are located in the same metropolitan area and tied intimately into the metropolitan socio-economic system. Thus we are talking about variation within a range of suburbs, not variation over the entire range of American society.

TABLE 2

COMPARATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SCHOOL DATA ON FOUR SAMPLE DISTRICTS

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D
Education				
Of total population 25 and older:				
% completing elem.:	.13	.17	.31	.42
% completing h. s.:	.33	.46	.50	.46
% completing college:	.54	.37	.19	.13
Income				
All families with income:				
Less than $7000:	.15	.21	.22	.35
$7000 to $9000:	.08	.25	.37	.38
More than $10,000:	.77	.54	.41	.27
Occupation				
Proportion of total employed in:				
Professional-managerial occupations:	.51	.42	.23	.17
Craftsmen, operatives or laborers:	.07	.21	.39	.43
Social Rank	95	83	63	53
Immobility				
Proportion of total population aged 5 or older in 1960 living in same house as 1955:	.52	.46	.41	.53
Fertility				
Children under 5 years of age per females aged 15 through 44:	.40	.53	.59	.49
Women in the Labor Force				
Percentage females aged 14 or older in the labor force:	.31	.28	.35	.41
Housing				
Proportion of total housing:				
Owner occupied:	.86	.87	.86	.47
Single family structure	.96	.91	.91	.42
Built since 1950	.36	.54	.70	.08

TABLE 2-Continued

	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D
Urbanism	30	22	23	50
Population	11,000	45,000	10,000	15,000
Number of Schools	4 K-6 1 7-8	10 K-6 2 7-8	1 K-5 1 3-8	3 K-6 1 K-8
School Enrollment	2,010	6,400	830	1,035
Parochial Enrollment	200	2,700	400	750
AV/ADA Assessed valuation per pupil 1964-65	45,287	28,556	74,158	39,698
OE/ADA Operating expense per student	717	621	644	627
Tax Rate Total school, 1964	1.944	2.042	.870	1.892

Sources: All demographic data except total population calculated from U. S. Bureau of Census.

Population by estimate of district school superintendents, who also supplied school enrollment data. Financial data from Cook County Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Probably the most striking difference among the four districts is to be found in the cluster of attributes that generally define "social status," i.e., the objective indicators of income, educational, and occupational distributions. In our larger sample study, these indicators showed high intercorrelations, and this subsample shows the same relationship. The districts vary from an upper-middle (or perhaps lower-upper) class place with three-quarters of family units having incomes over $10,000 and very few in craft and industrial worker occupations, to a substantially working-class suburb with slightly more than one-quarter of family units have high incomes and only 17% of the labor force in professional-managerial occupations. The distribution of educational backgrounds is similar. The same might be said of other characteristics of which we have no objective measures, e.g., the gross physical impression created by the four communities.

The aggregate status of residents in these communities ties in predictable ways to the economic functions of the areas in which they are located. The two higher rank places (A and B) are almost entirely residential, with small commercial zones in each but virtually nothing else except an occasional service establishment and a few small office buildings in B. The two lower are considerably industrialized, with District C somewhat more so than District D. The latter contains some older industrial plants with relatively small payrolls; it is nearby some of the older industrial suburbs of the Chicago area and not far from some industrial portions of the city itself. The industry in District C is for the most part newer and to some degree comprised of plants that have moved from the central city. This district is at one end of a suburban industrial enclave that has figured prominently in the pattern of metropolitan development. Districts A and B resemble classic commuter areas, with the former probably more oriented to the financial-professional hub of the inner city. (Both are stops on commuter railroads.) Communities C and D are more self-oriented economically and to a greater degree feed the industrial activities of contiguous subportions of the metropolis. This suggests a cosmopolitan-localite sort of distinction, a suggestion supported by our impressions but one on which we have little data except in reference to the school boards themselves.

On other characteristics the sample communities vary in ways not quite so regular but still not difficult to understand. District A, for example, falls considerably below the others in fertility ratio, i.e., in number of younger age children per women in child-bearing years. District C is highest by this measure. Although fertility and social rank are usually independent, District A's position here is probably status-related; the fertility differences may also be related to the religious composition of the communities. "Women in the labor force," a characteristic often associated with fertility in indexes of life-style, shows a somewhat different pattern, varying inversely with status except for the reversal of position of the two high-status districts. The low position of District B is probably attributable to the interaction of status, age of population, and fertility. To summarize the case in life-style terms, all these communities are "familistic," but District A is exceptional in terms of infertility and District D in terms of working women.

The distinctions drawn here are again reinforced by residence characteristics. Only District D shows an appreciable proportion of multi-family units, going over 50% while the others are in the 0-10% range. Proportion of units owner-occupied, a related measure, shows a similar pattern. The only other significant deviation is in age pattern of residences; by proportion of units built since 1950, District D ranks lowest, A next, and B and C follow. District D is a community of older homes, flats, and apartment buildings, A a community of old and large homes. Both B and C have been rapidly built up in private units since 1950, the latter containing somewhat more modest ones.

None of the sample communities includes a non-white population of significant size. District A has a substantial Jewish population, probably about one-third of the total, including a segment of old-time Jewish residents and a segment of recent arrivals from Chicago and other suburbs. District C has a somewhat Polish flavor, especially among older residents, and District D appears to be a mix, with some German, Italian, and Slavic cast. District B, formerly a German settlement, is now well-mixed in terms of cultural background and national origin.

Without exception these areas have undergone considerable change over the last few years, and all anticipate change in the future, though of different kinds. Probably, over-all, District D has been the most stable socially in the last two or three decades, with District A also fairly so. District A has experienced moderate population growth and B and C rapid growth, as reflected in the data on age of dwelling units. On immobility, measured by proportion of people living in the same house in 1960 as in 1955, A and D are nearly equal and B and C lower in that order. Informed respondents in A and B profess to detect an influx of younger people with larger families in recent years. All of these communities are now substantially built up. District D, the most stable in the recent past, however, may be the one that will feel the most change in the near future. Already its older structures are coming down to make way for high-rise apartment houses. If this development continues, it will undoubtedly give the district a more urban type of society. District B, and to a lesser extent District C, will in all probability continue to serve as waystations for many people on their way up the status ladder.

Basic school system characteristics.--Although most of this report is devoted to school system characteristics, it seems wise at this point to comment briefly on some of the gross features of the districts of our sample. Again, some of the most central are summarized in the statistics of Table 2, and some are held constant by the structure of the sample.

It will be noted that the districts range in enrollment from quite samll to moderate, i.e., from less than 1,000 to more than 6,000, and in number of building units from 2 to 12. Teaching staffs vary approximately in proportion, with all four of the districts maintaining an average class size of about 25. Estimated parochial elementary school enrollments from the districts also vary. District A has no parochial school within its boundaries, and district officials estimate that about 200 children, or about 10% of those of school age (grades 1 - 8 only), leave the district to attend parochial schools nearby. District B has 4 parochial schools enrolling about 2,700 from the district, or 29% of elementary age. Comparable figures for District C are 400 (33%), and for District D, 750 (42%).

Financial data on the districts also show some interesting variation. In terms of system resources as measured by assessed valuation per pupil, District C is vastly in the best position, with District A far behind but in second rank, D in third, and B in fourth. The positions of C and D reflect the advantages of districts with an industrial tax base. The good position of District A is attributable to its high-valued residential property and older-age population. It should be said that District B, the worst-off in the sample, is above the median for suburban Cook County.

District B is in the unfortunate position of taxing at a high rate and still showing less return in terms of operating expenditure per child. The contrast between B and C is radical, with B's tax rate more than twice that of C, and C still able to outstrip B in operating expenditure per student.

Parenthetically, the comparative positions of these two nearby suburbs is a stark illustration of the inequities and irrationalities generated by the political fragmentation of the metropolitan area. District A taxes itself severely and spends at a high rate, but it is also, it should be recalled, a community with high personal income levels. Its "effort," therefore, does not necessarily indicate great sacrifice. Perhaps the personal sacrifice for the schools is greatest in District D, where the tax rate is nearly as high as that in District A but personal incomes average much lower. Probably the lower proportion of owner-occupied homes in District D does have some mediating effect, as tax rates are limited by referendum votes and lower-income renters may be less vigilant fiscal conservatives than lower-income homeowners.

The school political system: the electoral process.--The most formal aspect of the process of articulating demands in a democratic polity is the electoral process. This is merely a way of stating the nub of classic democratic doctrine, the idea that government policy should be kept responsive to popular wishes through regular, institutionalized devices for the expression of choice. Traditionally, these devices have had two forms: some provide for the circulation of leadership through election to office, and some provide for the acceptance or rejection of policy itself through referenda.

As we noted in the preceding chapter, the school districts of which we are writing partake deeply of these democratic prescriptions of the American culture. Their boards are elected for staggered three-year terms, two or three positions being filled each April. All citizens over twenty-one are eligible to vote in these elections on signing of an affidavit of qualification. Board members are formally eligible for re-election indefinitely.

Thus in a formal sense the people of the districts renew their claims upon the authority system each year.

Electoral formalities, of course, define the meaning of a democratic system only in a very limited way. A more revealing perspective is to be gained from examination of the uses made of the electoral system in behavior, and the kinds of institutions that give the system its operating form. In these terms, despite their identical legal requirements and procedures, our sample districts exhibit radical differences. Table 3 shows aggregate percentages of participation and dissent (percentage of total votes cast for losers) in board elections over the period 1958-66 inclusive. These data indicate a sharp distinction between the top two districts and the bottom two. In the former participation has tended to be light and dissent small, although the level of dissent in District B has climbed from 2% to 13% since 1962.

The explanation of this difference between sets of districts probably lies in the fact that two (A and B) have school nominating caucuses and two do not. Earlier we mentioned the systematic relationship of caucus and election results over our 48-district sample; here we have the same effect on a smaller scale. In the lower conflict districts the caucuses have had a virtual monopoly over board nominations. In the higher conflict districts nominations are effectively open to whoever "throws his hat in the ring," and some do. The caucuses in Districts A and B are structured somewhat differently, but they operate to the same general effect.

Community A has had a caucus system for more than 40 years. Members of the caucus are selected from precincts by a postcard vote, with more than 2,000 votes sometimes cast. The caucus nominates candidates for all community governing boards--i.e., the municipal council and library and park boards as well as the school board. A committee screens potential school

TABLE 3

BOARD ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA: 1958-1966 PARTICIPATION AND DISSENT IN SAMPLE DISTRICTS.

District	Board Elections		Referenda	
	Participation	Dissent	Participation	Dissent
A	5.11	0.3	15.73	23.3
B	6.3	13.0	17.5	50.8
C	9.6	27.9	22.3	41.6
D	9.7	30.2	6.0	42.7

board candidates and presents recommendations to the entire caucus which itself makes the final selections. Traditionally, the caucus nominates a number of candidates equal to the number of positions to be filled. In this community there is virtually never opposition to any caucus candidates.

Community B's caucus is confined to school board nominations. It has been in existence for about 30 years. This caucus is organization-based, i.e., its members are the representatives of community groups that have been accepted by the caucus as participants. These groups include Parent Teacher Associations, civic groups, and churches, organizations that are deemed non-political and have been in existence two or more years. In total more than thirty groups, plus churches send one delegate each; each school's PTA sends two. Over the years this community has seldom seen opposition to the caucus nominees develop to serious proportions. However, in the last three board elections this situation has changed, and in one of these one of the three caucus candidates was beaten.

The electoral situation in District B reflects a change in context that is crucial to our interpretation of the operation of the school political system. The community has long been known as a rather "conservative" one, though the school system is vigorous and has been somewhat experimental. Social changes in the district, particularly the construction of slightly lower income housing and a rise in the number of parochial school parents have apparently given more direction and weight to this conservative outlook. A rather informal but organized group in the district began about 1963 to push a "fundamental education" philosophy. This group has had some impact on decision-making, as we shall see in succeeding chapters; more immediately, it was behind the independent who defeated the caucus candidate in a recent year.

Neither District C nor District D shows any particular pattern of opposition. The appearance of multiple candidates seems, on the whole, fortuitous and the result of absence of structure in the political system. Several years previous to the test period District D had undergone a change in superintendents following the discharge of the incumbent. This series of incidents had personal overtones and did create some side-effects in elections. There is not evidence, however, that this opposition was organized or ideological.

Referendum voting in the districts shows a somewhat different pattern. Participation was significantly lower only in District D, where during the entire 1958-66 period there was only one referendum held. On dissent, District A was markedly low and District B markedly high. The District B phenomenon is the unusual one, and this is particularly interesting when broken down by time periods. Before 1963 the District B dissent index was 35.3; the referenda held since have pulled the cumulative score up sharply. Here, as in the district's board election history, change in the direction of higher conflict levels is evident. Here, too, interview evidence suggests that some organized opposition has been developed by those negative toward the district's established policies and procedures.

The electoral systems reviewed above appear to function in different ways as demand aggregating devices. The referenda are fairly clear and specific in effect. A defeated bond issue or rate rise is defeated until it is presented to the voters again (and then, of course, it may stay defeated). A passed measure seems generally to be regarded as a success, whatever the margin of the vote. (District C built its new school on the strength of a bond issue that passed by 9 votes out of almost 900 cast.) Some decision-makers doubtless "read" referenda for political implications, but the process of interpretation seems usually to be a simple one.

Board elections raise different questions of interpretation. The experiences of the districts reviewed here suggest that the caucus districts (A and B) have probably achieved somewhat greater clarity of demands through electoral processes, but in different ways and with different results. Neither caucus appears to take a stand on substantive issues; both seem to seek "representative" candidates, i.e., candidates who are "interested" in education but have no particular pitch to make. Once elected, the behavior of such candidates is likely, in most circumstances, to be congenial to the established policies and practices of board and administration. Therefore, in effect the caucus system creates the opportunity to have a periodic plebiscite on the establishment, the latter term meaning not a covert power elite but the public practices of the authority system. District A has found its establishment eminently acceptable. District B has found its less so in recent years. The signals from the electorate have been visible if not perfectly clear.

Comparison of these four systems suggests that the caucus may, even when it is habitually unopposed, serve to "structure" the electoral situation into a fairly meaningful demand aggregation device. This is not to say that contests in non-caucus districts cannot be meaningful--obviously they can--but rather to propose that they are less likely to be. Indeed, District B has created, probably temporarily, something like a party system in school politics. This may not be an unqualified blessing; indeed, it may not be a blessing at all. But as a political situation, i.e., a situation in which popular demands are taken seriously, it presents an interesting picture.

The caucus may also have the effect of suppressing potential demands. As part of the established political culture, and as an answer to the uncertainties of an unstructured world, it doubtless has a great deal of power over potential dissidents, power of a subtle and implicit nature. By virtue of its very existence, and by the use of cooptation, the caucus can be a means of putting down dissent. Our evidence, such as it is, suggests that it is the less likely to be able to do so in a community undergoing change.

The schools and the public.--Without sample survey data it is impossible to gauge in any detail the attitudes of the public toward these school systems. We can, however, suggest some things about the system of communication between public and decision-makers as it appears on the surface.

Examination of the newspaper coverage of school matters in the four districts again indicates wide variation among them. The qualifications attaching to this kind of evidence were mentioned above, and these should be kept in mind. Table 4 summarizes the results of our content analysis of the community press of each sample district. What these data reveal most strikingly is the vast difference in newspaper attention to the schools in Districts A and B as compared to Districts C and D. Over the test period the former had many times more exposure to school information than the latter. In both A and B the papers attempt to keep a fairly steady flow of school information coming in their pages, while in C and D it is sporadic and, one would judge, almost accidental in the incidence of its appearance. In all of the papers much that is published originates with the school administration. In Districts A and B there was a reporter in regular attendance at board meetings observed by the project staff, and in Districts C and D no reporter was ever present.

Among subject-matter themes, election news was the modal category in all districts but C, where slightly more attention was given to new school construction. Beyond this observation, probably the most significant difference is the attention given to curriculum, where both A and B were relatively heavy.

TABLE 4

SUMMARY OF PRESS COVERAGE OF SCHOOL NEWS IN SAMPLE DISTRICTS

Subject Matter Themes	Community A	Community B	Community C	Community D
1. Personnel	29 (9%)	44 (14%)	0	9 (20%)
2. Curriculum	69 (20)	67 (21)	6 (16%)	0
3. School-Comm. relations	44 (13)	24 (8)	0	1 (2)
4. Facilities	32 (10)	43 (14)	13 (34)	2 (4)
5. Finance	68 (20)	45 (14)	8 (21)	8 (18)
6. Administration	10 (3)	6 (2)	0	2 (4)
7. Elections	83 (25)	89 (28)	11 (29)	23 (51)
Total Themes	335 (101%)	318 (101%)	38 (100%)	45 (99%)
Types of Items				
Articles	287 (96%)	204 (79%)	32 (96%)	42 (93%)*
Letters	7 (2)	47 (17)	2 (5)	3 (7)
Editorials	6 (2)	8 (3)	0	0
Total Items	300 (100%)	259 (99%)	34 (101%)	45 (100%)

*Includes 11 advertisements for school election candidates

The conclusions to be drawn from these data are limited, but they contribute in some degree to the picture we are developing of school system politics among the districts of our sample. It is apparent that the people of Districts A and B receive much more exposure to the operations of the school system through the press than C and D. Whether this is by popular demand, by decision of those who control the press, or simply a reflection of the relatively greater size of the papers in the former districts, the fact remains that information is more abundant in some districts than in others. Interestingly enough, over the long term the magnitude of information is inverse to the degree of electoral conflict. Once again, the higher status districts seem to show the results of a more structured public approach to school affairs. Only in District B do letters to the editor appear in sufficient bulk to suggest that they comprise a significant means of communication from the public to the board.

Other means of demand presentation are of course available to the public. These particularly consist of individual and group representations to the authority system at various points. Systematic coverage of all of these points would require a more intensive monitoring of the system than has been possible in this project. A number of clues, however, are available.

We are not able to gauge accurately the volume and content of individual messages from the public to board members, administration, or staff. Most such messages do not involve major policy problems and therefore do not reach the top authority level in a formal way. Observations and conversations suggest that some do come in all districts, that the focal point of such communication is the superintendent, and that board members in A and B were somewhat more sensitive than those in C and D about sending individuals through administrative channels. In District A, however, the women on the board, because of their community contacts and available time, are somewhat likely to be conveyors of public communication. Individual, as contrasted to group, representations at formal board meetings are rare in all districts.

On the level of group communication, the picture is rather different, with Districts A and B again showing more highly structured activity. Perhaps this reflects a higher community interest in education, but it also conveys a sense of greater aggregate organizational and communications skills. Public attendance at board meetings in Districts C and D was so slight as to be almost non-existent. In neither district during the period of observation was there a presentation of questions or problems by group representatives of any kind. In very rare cases board members themselves presented group requests. In general, however, evidence of group interest or pressure in these districts was minimal.

District A board meetings were regularly attended by representatives of the Parent Teachers Association and the League of Women Voters, and on occasion these ladies were formally or informally drawn into the discussion. They appear to perform a watchdog role, albeit in a way friendly to the board and administration. In addition, District A has had on one occasion in recent years a citizens' group develop to crystallize public interest in education. Other civic organizations appear to relate to education in a very casual way.

District B has in the past few years developed a very lively group life in the educational sphere. Both the PTA's and the League have made themselves felt, though not so actively as in District A. As we noted above, however, this district now has a very aggressive "Citizens for Fundamental Education" type group that exerts pressure not only at elections but constantly in between. The extent to which this group is formally organized is unclear, though there is no doubt that it is sufficiently organized to maintain a constant core of interest among the committed and facilitate communication among them. People apparently identified with it are present in numbers (sometimes as many as six or eight) at every board meeting. Communications from them about educational and administrative problems come formally and informally, orally and in writing, at board meetings and in the newspapers. They particularly have access to the board through one board member. Largely because of the activities of this group, public interest in education in District B seems higher than in any other district in the sample. By some standards, this interest is destructive, both in the fact it exists and in the kind of pressure it exerts. It is certainly not unconnected with the loss of two bond referenda propositions. Nonetheless, it is public interest, and it is demand presentation behavior. As of the end of the study, too, control of the district remains with the administration-centered "establishment."

Demands from within the system.--Demands for decisional action also originate within the system. As these are fairly common among schools and involve organizational style as much as social base, we will treat them only briefly here. Basically, they seem to be of three kinds: representations of personal need from employees of the school organization; proposals for adjustment of the institutional arrangements of the decision-making sub-system itself; and substantive proposals arising out of technical expertise. The substance of these will be illustrated in subsequent chapters where the decision process and its content are discussed.

Most demands of the first kind come through administrative channels and are finally presented by the superintendent himself. Boards in three of our districts are "channel-conscious" and take care not to short-cut the administration, though Districts A and B seem somewhat more so than D. The District C board members rather often ignore channels in dealing with staff and community. Still, the decision-making process seems more open to the bureaucracy, both line and staff, in A and B. Thus in these districts teachers, principals, and other personnel were far more likely to be present at board meetings and to be invited to make statements on such matters as personal leaves of absence, the school calendar, and program adjustments. Such participation was rare in Districts C and D.

Internal demands of the second kind are likely to emanate from the superintendent, the board president, or board members. They are not many in number, and there seems to be no notable divergence among districts as to the way they are handled.

The demands of technical expertise, on the other hand, are many and varied. They comprise the bulk of impetus to action in all districts, without doubt outweighing in number and force the demands that originate with the public. So intermingled is this subject with questions about division of labor and demand presentation that we will not attempt to treat it at length here. We should note, however, that these demands may originate in the technical judgment of the superintendent or in that of other staff administrators or teachers, or even, though rarely, in expert perspectives of board members. These demands are stimulated by professional training, experience, by functional pressure, and not infrequently, by professional associations of school men. The last appear to be of great importance in the creation of ideas for action in local districts, though these ideas are usually generalized in form.

Intergovernmental demands.--Finally, note should be taken of demands made on school systems from sources external to themselves. The most significant of these come from other units of government, national, state, and local. The state, of course, prescribes an elaborate and detailed set of requirements for local systems, and these are substantially common to the districts in our sample. District reactions to state regulations may vary to some degree, but as context demands they bear on all in similar ways.

Demands from the national government perhaps might better be described as opportunities--opportunities to benefit financially from federal programs. All of the districts in the sample have undertaken some participation in Title IV enrichment programs. District D has developed a federally-funded though rather small-scale poverty program, and District C receives some school-lunch aid. All boards in the sample have seen some ideological opposition to this participation, though it has been more intense among the members of Districts B and C. The inducement of proffered funds is strong, however, apparently usually too strong to resist. All of the boards in the sample have devoted a certain amount of time to discussion of the opportunities and problems associated with national educational programs.

The association of school systems with other units of community government presents a more complicated picture. As Chapter I explained, these districts have no significant formal ties with such units. Their areas of common interest, however, reach across a wide range, including such subjects as land-use, zoning and planning, police and fire protection, welfare, health, recreational facilities, intergroup relations, and fiscal resources. In most of these fields the school system is independent of the municipality, although they are implicitly competitive because both are heavily reliant on real property taxes.[1]

The four districts in the sample are each substantially within, though none is completely coterminous with, municipalities. None of them interacts intensively with the municipal unit, though all appear to be on more or less friendly terms. In none does there seem to be much active awareness of spheres of common interest. The links between school and other units are probably best developed in District A. There the superintendent reports that he meets monthly at lunch with the top administrative officers of the municipality, park board, and library board to discuss problems and identify the people that "bother us." He also mentioned occasional additional communication with the village manager, especially with respect to traffic and other safety problems. The school district also has representation on the planning commission, a body with advisory powers, and it has a formal arrangement with the park district for provision and maintenance of school-ground parks. The district also sends a representative to an advisory recreation committee.

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[1] From a more general point of view these relationships will be discussed by the author in Robert J. Havighurst, ed., Metropolitanism: Its Challenge to Education (1968 Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, forthcoming).

District B also has a joint facilities arrangement with its community's park district, but little contact beyond this. Supposed liaison with the municipal council seemed mythical. On two occasions during the observation period, discussion of problems of common interest with the municipality--one having to do with traffic safety, the other with streets and sidewalks--brought out a tone of impatience and hostility at school board meetings.

District C likewise has cooperative arrangements with the local park district, and school board members report some contacts with municipal and library officials. An administrator from the schools is, in fact, a member of the local library board. A request from the park district for extended use of some school facilities, however, was rather coolly received by the school board. On the whole, there is little to indicate either a negative or a positive set of relationships here. This district may suffer in some ways from the fact that it is in an area of unusual political fragmentation. It includes only about half the area of the municipality, and half of the park district. There seems to be, therefore, an unusual sense of separation among jurisdictions, and the board rather seems to prize its resultant isolation.

District D shows even thinner contacts with other jurisdictions. There is some indication from interview comments that officials in this district fear "political" interference and therefore are pleased to maintain their distance. The school board was formerly represented on the municipal zoning board but is no longer. While attitudes toward other units among school officials are not particularly negative, there appears to be little substantial cooperation.

On the whole, then, lateral relations with governments are few and informal, especially outside the recreational sphere and the provision of "housekeeping" services of which the schools are consumers. In general, the picture seems to be conditioned by the American tradition that schools should be isolated from "politics." Our evidence suggests that District A is nearest to an exception in this respect. It may be pertinent that it shares a caucus nominating system with the other local units. More generally, the district may in this respect again show the benefits of an abundance of organizational skill and professional management.

CHAPTER III

THE INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF DEMANDS

The preceding chapter reviewed the sources of political demands and the mechanisms of demand aggregation in the four communities under study. Demands are potentially stimuli to action. They may provide the decision-making system to which they are directed with the impetus to do things. No policy-making body, however, can react to all the stimuli that might be thrust upon it. For reasons of time, if nothing else, the messages that come to the governing level of a complex organization must be screened through some filtering process. This is particularly so if the policy-making body can, by its nature, devote only limited attention to the organizational job it has to do. Thus, for a body like a school board the filtering process is an ever-present part of the equipment with which it faces its tasks.

The function of filtering may be carried out in a planned, purposeful, and rational way, or it may occur accidentally. It is not our intention to suggest that filtering is necessarily done effectively or even consciously. Further, it may be done by application of any one or a combination of a large number of criteria, either thoughtfully applied or otherwise. These criteria might include, for example, legal requirements, cultural constraints, professional judgments, and personal prejudices. Whatever the criteria, however they are developed and applied, the point is that the process of selection goes forward as the system functions;

priorities are inevitably set as business is fed to the decision-making apparatus.

This is the role of that part of the governing process to which we refer as the interpretation and presentation of demands to the policy-making body. Fundamentally, the questions are, who does it, how, and by what criteria? The answers to these might vary greatly, of course, from system to system. Our examination of school districts will proceed in terms of three interrelated aspects of the process; agenda-setting, the supplying of information, and the making of recommendations.

Agenda.--Agenda are, according to the dictionary, "things to be done." We mean to include here those things that reach the official or semi-official attention of school district policy-making bodies, i.e., board and top administration acting together. Questions about the agenda of such bodies are also questions about problems that might reach their attention but do not. These are the problems "screened out," problems ignored or turned aside. The boundaries of the agenda-setting process are thus obscure. As we cannot, with the information we have, know the parameters of the demand structures of our sample districts, we cannot definitively gauge their potential agenda. We can, however, say some things about the active face of the process and the way it seems to be carried out in these systems.

In the first place, it should be noted that there are categories of agenda items that are relatively fixed, that require consideration at some given time. Some of these are minor or may easily be treated as such, e.g., the approval of minutes, meeting by meeting. Some are routine but may be blown into major proportions, depending fundamentally on the attitude of the board toward staff work. Thus the payment of bills, a task that requires board approval, is handled summarily and formally in some districts and becomes the subject of extensive discussion in others. Finally, some fixed items, particularly the preparation of the budget, are of clear and major proportions. The employment of new teachers also falls in this set. Whatever style the board may use in handling these matters of fixed agenda, there is little discretion to be exercised by anyone in putting them on the schedule for board consideration.

Only a small portion of agenda items are fixed in this sense. Beyond these the agenda are subject to discretionary choice, although some will inevitably force their way into eventual consideration. In every district in the sample the superintendent fulfills the function of preparing formal agenda for board meetings. These may be more or less detailed and more or less subject to practical revision during the course of discussion. The agenda for District C were not made available for visitors at board meetings (probably for the simple reason that few people visited the board). It appeared that these agenda, however, lacked specificity; to some extent, so did those used in District D. Districts A and B, however, tended to work off relatively detailed agenda that usually provided firmer control of the flow of business. The members of Boards A and B and to a lesser extent D received extensive documentation on proposed items of business in advance of meetings.

The selection of items for inclusion appears to reflect the superintendent's estimate of the time likely to be put into fixed routine matters, his estimate of probable deviations from the specified flow of business, and his sense of the appropriate character and range of board interests. Where routine matters were handled with dispatch, agenda were likely to include more extended presentations on policy items, especially on matters of educational program. Where routines were discussed at length, such policy items seldom appeared, and boards tended therefore to be steered away from broad questions and to receive less information on the broad aspects of program. Superintendents in the former kind of district appear to see the boards as forums for discussion and vehicles for communication, while those in the latter seem more inclined to use boards as decision-making machines. In the latter cases the question does not seem to be one of concealment of information by the superintendent but one of pre-emption of the attention of the board by business of a different level. The difference lies at least in part in sophistication in the use of machinery and in part in perspectives on the role and use of staff work.

In District A, where there is high reliance on the staff, the board stays close to the superintendent's rather detailed agenda. Items are likely to include questions of educational policy, and the discussion sometimes moves to a fairly high level of abstraction. While the style of this board appears to be very open, discussion tends to stay relevant. In a sense, the appearance of openness is deceptive. The general effect is one of very effective but never strident or repressive control of business by the superintendent.

District B perhaps presents the most interesting case in the sample. Here the style is fundamentally the same, but the counterforces are much stronger. The board tends to stay relevant, but hostility toward the superintendent and organized pressure from the community bring about some deviation from this pattern and generate some protracted discussions of relatively routine questions. Nonetheless, the superintendent does introduce questions of educational policy, if in a somewhat more formal way than his counterpart in District A, and the board pursues them vigorously. The over-all impression created by this situation is one of ambivalence that clearly reflects the ambivalent structure of community characteristics. As a later chapter will show, the result has been very long meetings and development of some rather elaborate process-management devices. District B, in other words, seems to strain toward the District A mode of operation, but only with difficulty and partial success.

In District C agenda tend to be very ineffective in screening and controlling business. Here the superintendent makes less effort to fix the subjects or course of discussion, and little effort to introduce policy questions or program discussion. The process is thus protracted, detailed, and unstructured, and the occasional efforts of the board president and superintendent to keep it otherwise are usually fruitless.

District D, on the other hand, tends to see business well-controlled but on generally low-level problems. The superintendent's agenda are more detailed and effective than those of District C, but they seldom move to abstract questions or to policy problems. The focus of the process seldom strays far from routine matters, and those are usually routine matters screened by the superintendent.

Interestingly enough, the business of Districts C and D tends to be determined almost entirely within the authority system. Districts A and B, especially the latter, are much more likely to see matters introduced from beyond the authority system itself, i.e., from the community, staff and line employees, and other units of government. As the discussion above would suggest, in District B such items are often disruptive of the control system, in District A seldom so. It may also be inferred, though it cannot be proved, that the business of these latter districts is more likely to arise from "professional" considerations as distinct from administrative compulsions, i.e., it is likely to come from the latitude felt by the professionals in the system to seek program innovation.

In summary, in all the sample districts the superintendent is the chief agenda-setting functionary. They vary, however, in the kinds of business they try to introduce and the effectiveness with which they control the flow of process. Some of the consequences of these variations will be discussed in chapters to follow, where other aspects of decision-making are considered.

Information.--A second aspect of the demand-presentation process is the provision of information. Basically, this information may be of three kinds, bearing on the nature of the demands in question, the range of appropriate action alternatives, or the relative costs (or consequences) of various alternatives. The first kind has to do with the interpretation of demands, with such matters as the sources and weight of pressure to take up a given problem or follow a given course of action. In some cases this is a simple and obvious kind of information, as in those situations where the demand is routine. In other cases it involves elaborate political assessment of the context of the system. Information of the second kind defines the problem or item of business in action terms. It tends to determine the framework within which the problem is seen, to structure business by setting limits to the range of consideration or perspective brought to bear. Again, this may be a routine matter or a matter of some complexity, and the difference is not necessarily one of the "magnitude" of the problem involved. Some decision-making groups are capable of making a mountain out of a molehill, others of making a molehill out of a mountain.

The third kind of information mentioned above, information about the costs of alternative courses of policy, is potentially the most complex, and probably the most variable both among systems and among items of business. It provides the equipment by which policies can be judged as to the probability of their reaching desired ends. If the definition of the problem delimits the standards by which action is to be judged, information about alternatives indicates what means may satisfy those standards. It is

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at this point that knowledge, experience, and professional beliefs enter the picture most clearly, and it is here that the history of the past and the accomplishments and failures of other systems become most pertinent. The output of a decision-making process, policy choice, depends as well on the adequacy of the information available as on the judgment in selection that goes into choice.

Observation of our study districts suggests that relatively little thought is given to information of the first two kinds. Information about demands is likely to come from both the superintendent and board, the former because of his central position in the communication system and the latter because of the political nature of their roles and the fact that they define themselves to one extent or the other as representatives of the community. Both superintendent and board are able to "create" demands by identifying or stimulating needs. When community influentials were asked to whom they would address a question or suggestion about school policy, both the superintendent and board were commonly mentioned. Only respondents in District D varied significantly; all but one of these mentioned only the superintendent. Superintendents tend to trigger the automatic processes of routine demand detection--those having to do with reports, formal legal requirements, etc. For the most part, however, the provision of information about other demands seems to be shared by administrators and board, all of them tending to rely heavily on their "feel" for their districts.

Information on the nature and range of alternatives tends to fall largely within the province of the superintendent, as a consequence of his control of agenda and probably of the time and experience he can devote to the policy-making job. It is interesting to note that in two of the districts (B and C) the board's attorney was often present at meetings and when present was often called upon to define alternatives, sometimes on problems not strictly "legal" in character. The attorney was employed, in other words, as an alternative-defining expert. In Districts A and D the board attorney did not attend meetings, and his advice, when sought, was usually filtered through the superintendent. In A and B, other staff advice (from business manager or facilities man, for example) sometimes helped directly to settle problems of this kind.

It should not be supposed, however, that superintendents are always able to impose their definitions of alternatives successfully. As our foregoing discussion of agenda implied, the boards in Districts A and D seem least likely to go beyond the definition of the problem supplied by the superintendent. Even here, however, exceptions were noted. In District A, for example, a proposal that the system cooperate in a university survey of brain-damaged children, treated by the superintendent as a question of scientific interest and responsibility, was converted by the board into a problem in community relations. Hardly a major issue in the life of the district, this was probably the most serious set-back suffered by this superintendent during the period of the study. District B's board was inclined to fight within itself over the tendency of some members (one in particular, sometimes followed by others) to convert questions into ideological issues. This tendency was usually suppressed, but at a price. The board in District C fairly often transformed relatively minor issues (the making of a long-distance telephone call or the selection of floor tile, for example) into major moral questions. In effect, this reflects the power of the boards (especially in Districts B and C) to revise the superintendent's agenda.

The provision of information about the costs of courses of action is most basic, and also hardest to pin down to empirical evidence. Only here and there do the interview materials indicate that boards are dissatisfied with the amount or quality of information they get from their administrations. Only two board members in District C and one in each of the other districts mentioned inadequacy of information in a specific way. The comment from the District A respondent was to the effect that the relations of board and superintendent had been too good, so good that it was hard to get requests for information treated seriously.

It is apparent that all superintendents in the sample try conscientiously to supply adêquate information for the making of choice. Three of the four mentioned this in inverviews as one of the basic responsibilities of the chief administrator, the exception being C. Observation and informal discussion suggest that the boards of Districts A and B are provided with wider-ranging information on educational questions, innovations, data on the experiences of other systems, etc. The superintendent of one of these is co-author of a noted textbook in the education field, and his command of the literature is exceptional. Probably Superintendent B is pressed hardest for information of both a specific and a general technical sort. In both these districts a considerable amount of sophisticated educational information is pumped into the system, perhaps more than a lay board can effectively use. Their scale makes it possible for them to employ larger administrative staffs than C and D, a fact particularly important in the information-gathering process.

Board members themselves may be and often are sources of information of this order. In this respect boards differ in style and resources. Both District A and District B have lawyer board members, for instance, while neither C nor D do. Districts A and D each have three women, B has one, C none. Lawyers, women, doctors, plumbers, etc., have specialized pertinent information they may plow into the decision-making process. Generally speaking, it appears that board members are less likely to impose their own technical information on their boards in the higher status districts than in the lower status ones.

Recommendations are information of a very specialized kind--information about the assessment of a problem made by the person from whom the recommendation comes. The significance of recommendations flows from the behavior that follows them. For this reason we will reserve our discussion of recommendations for the chapter that follows, where decision-making behavior will be the principal topic. Let it be noted, however, that recommendations play a major part in the governing process of the school districts we are studying.

CHAPTER IV

DECISION-MAKING: FORM AND ATMOSPHERE

Agenda and the supply of information set limits to the decision-making process. They determine what can be done, the range of problems and alternatives suitable for policy action. The heart of the process, however, is what follows the presentation of demands: the behaviors of people acting together to create a system of policy. The analysis of this process is not easy, for any attempt to break it into component parts risks the possibility that either some part or some attribute of the whole will be ignored. Basically, the business of decision-making within an established system involves a set of actors weighing evidence and making choice within a framework of institutions, i.e., accustomed routines of interaction.

Structures and procedures.--The structures or institutional arrangements of school system government are relatively simple. In their most general aspects, and to some extent in matters of detail, these arrangements are imposed by state law. Thus as we noted before, the systems in our sample are established as independent districts with governing boards of seven elected members. These boards are vested with formal powers to conduct the districts' business within the boundaries set by the state. They elect a president from among their number who formally presides over board activity. The presidency is customarily rotated year by year among the members, falling usually to someone with a longer period of service. The president is in some formal sense the chief functionary of the district. Boards also select a secretary--in Districts C and D a board member, in Districts A and B the business manager. In some districts the superintendent serves as secretary.

The boards meet in public session at intervals of their own choice, usually on a given day (in District B two days) each month. At these meetings the official business of the districts is transacted, though it is the ordinary practice in all of the four to go into executive session to deal with property purchases and "delicate" personnel matters. All of the districts have written by-laws of a fairly conventional sort to govern procedures. All employ a general superintendent who is very much a part of the decision-making picture, but who has no vote. Beyond these there are very few fixed, formal aspects of the process that figure in it in important ways.

While these matters of structure provide a framework within which the decision-makers operate, they do not go far toward determining the shape or substance of the process. Much that might be called structure is informal and best described in terms of the patterns of interactive behavior themselves. Two items do, however, fit the category of structure and seem best discussed here. One of these is the use of "informal" decisional meetings, the other the use of committees in doing the work of the board.

It is common to suppose that local governing bodies do most of their work in secret sessions where they are sheltered from the inquisitive gaze of the public and press. There is no doubt that much of the work of community government is done in this way in some places--there is probably no satisfactory way of discovering how much and how many places. By its nature the question is a difficult one to answer, both in general and with respect to specific jurisdictions. Some evidence and some impressions about the practice in the sample districts are available, however, probably enough to allow a reasonably accurate assessment. Although Illinois law forbids "secret government," such legislation is easy to circumvent and does not by itself answer the question.

On the whole, it is doubtful that as much of the government of school districts is done in private sessions as common assumption would have us believe. If the work of school boards seems to be done in a pre-emptory way, there are probably other reasons. In approaching the subject, a distinction should be drawn between informational and decision-making sessions. The distinction is obviously not easy to establish, for an information meeting can easily be pointed toward a decision or become the ground for tacit agreement, but in terms of intent, level of discussion, and outcome the distinction is probably defensible.

Secret meetings for decision purposes seem quite rare in District A; information sessions apart from regular board meetings occur about once a month. The superintendent in District A was quite explicit about the difference between meetings of these kinds, and recalled only one that verged on decision during the last year, this dealing with a broad policy matter of considerable importance. Observation of meetings yielded no indication of pre-decision even though business is handled quickly and without controversy.

District D likewise appears to do little or no business in secret, and also seems to have few information meetings outside the regular public sessions of the board. This board operates to an unusual degree in public, the reason perhaps being that the public takes little interest in its meetings. Only rarely was any audience present. On one occasion the board even discussed in public session the price it might bid for a piece of property, the only observers present being members of this project's research group. In District C the situation is less clear. Here, too, very few people outside the board and administration visited meetings. In neither C nor D was a newspaper reporter ever present at a board meeting during the observation period. District C held occasional irregular board meetings, especially in connection with construction of a new school. These, one would judge from appearances, were decisional in the sense that they dealt with myriad details of the job. They did not seem to issue in "conspiratorial" decisions on large policy matters.

Among the districts in the sample, B gave evidence of the most active use of irregular meetings. One board member commented that he had been surprised on his election to the board to discover how much of the district's work was done in "closed" board meetings. Others commented on the frequency of informal meetings, even, apparently, despite the fact that this board met in formal session bi-weekly during the observation period. In one instance the formal meeting following a public eruption of crisis in the district was unusually short and the crisis was mentioned only in a public statement read by the board president. The statement, we were told later, had been prepared previously and agreed upon by the members of the board. We were also told that there is a certain amount of "caucusing" among some board members between meetings.

The practice of holding irregular meetings in District B can be laid directly to the political situation in the district. Not only is there much active public interest in school affairs, but some of it, as we have noted before, is organized and hostile to the administration. The board, as a result, sometimes reflects a sense of harassment. One of the devices it has developed to deal with its ambiguous situation is to retreat from public view. Despite the obvious risks involved, especially with a rather divided board, the leaders in the district have apparently developed the irregular session as a protective conflict management device.

The use of committees by the sample boards presents some interesting contrasts. The committee system is so widely employed by decision-making organizations as a means of providing better review of action, developing information channels, and structuring the deliberative process that it is often regarded as a natural or inevitable institutional form. Yet in all the districts under study but one, misgivings about the utility of committees were expressed by some interviewees. Three of the district superintendents revealed such doubts, all suggesting that committees merely double the work of deliberation. One commented that committees simply extend the time and effort required of the superintendent to get what he wants anyway, and none of the administrators expressed fear that committees might develop too much specialized power or expertise.

The systems used in the districts vary considerably. In District A there are no standing committees, but fairly often ad hoc "task groups" are formed to study specific problems or subjects, on occasion a single board member serving such a function. The superintendent participates with all these groups, and their efforts usually seem to result in an informational report to the board, often informal and usually without specific recommendations.

District B has, again probably in response to the political conditions reviewed a few paragraphs above, used committees actively and experimented with alternative structures. At one point the board was divided into a number of small committees with overlapping memberships, but because this technique fostered the double-discussion of many issues it led some members of the board and administration to conclude that their efforts were being needlessly duplicated. In the succeeding period the board has utilized committees of the whole under a different chairman for each subject-matter area. This system demands vast amounts of time from the entire board and therefore raises practical problems of its own, prompting some consideration of a return to the small-committee arrangement. This board has also, on occasion, used ad hoc committees for special assignments.

District C has a permanent structure of small committees, and the board apparently attaches considerable importance to their place in the decision-making process. Some of these tend to be one-man affairs dominated by a member with long service on the board. Ordinarily a place is reserved on the agenda for several committee reports, and this may well be one of the reasons the superintendent tends to lose agenda control. The active role of committees in the process also tends to vitiate the administrator's recommendatory role and fragment power in the system. The use of committees thus magnifies some of the system's problems in developing a focus for business and handling it with expedition.

District D has no standing committees, meets occasionally as a committee of the whole, and seldom uses special committees or task groups for particular jobs.

Reflection suggests that a standing committee system introduces rigidities into the decision-making process in boards of this kind, and sometimes creates diversionary centers of power. While the latter may provide a set of checks on arbitrary leadership dominance, committees may be an expensive way of achieving this goal. The size of the boards in the sample and the nature of district business are such that adequate control can come through effective operation of the whole board; whether the division of responsibility by specific subject categories is either necessary or functional seems doubtful. Such division appears likely to create interference in detail rather than responsibility for the whole, and distract the board from the higher level policy role it is better suited to play.

At the same time, the ad hoc committee, if employed sparingly, may be a useful consensus-creating device.

Characteristics of the actors in the decision-making process.--Before we continue our discussion of the decision-making process proper, it would seem well to review the characteristics of those who play central parts in it. This will particularly serve the purpose of illustrating the interplay between system and personal characteristics that gives substance to organizational life. While there is no such thing as a typical board member, in the aggregate the members of our sample boards have traits that both reflect the communities in which they serve and condition the work of the bodies in which they participate.

Table 5 summarizes selected board characteristics. These data speak for themselves, but certain aspects merit particular attention. On the whole, the boards scale on social characteristics as do their communities, except for the reversal of Districts C and D. The position of Board C may be explained as a "lag" caused by the very long tenure of its members. The tenure pictures in Districts A and B are the artifactual effect of caucus rules in the two communities that forbid nomination for more than two terms (a total of six years of service). It might be expected that even without such a rule average service in these districts would be shorter, on the premise that participation in government is more likely to be seen as a duty in high status suburbs and as a privilege in lower status ones.

The distribution of women on the boards conforms with expectations except in District D. In the 48-district study of suburban school systems, higher status districts had significantly larger numbers of women than lower status districts. Occupational distributions tend to follow aggregate community patterns, as do those for education. The District A board is heavily managerial-professional, with two lawyers, a doctor, an executive,

TABLE 5

CHARACTERISTICS OF BOARD MEMBERS IN SAMPLE DISTRICTS

	A	B	C	D
Average age (est.)	45+	45	53+	52
Average education beyond H.S.	5.4	4.9	1.0	1.4
Occupation index*	4.00	3.42	2.14	2.50
Average length of service	3	3	13	8
Women on board	3	1	0	3

*4-professional-managerial, 3-small business-sales, 2-white collar, 1-skilled workers, 0-laborers. Housewives classified by husband's occupation.

and three wives of executive people. District B's board has two lawyers, two proprietors of businesses, one executive, one salesman, and one housewife as members. District C's includes one small-business proprietor and no professionals, District D's one executive, two small proprietors, one middle-management man in a small commercial enterprise, one skilled worker, and two widows not employed. None of the members of Board A (including the husbands of women on the board) works in the community, and all but one commutes to the central city; one member of District B's board works in the community and one in another suburb, the remainder going to the central city. Of Board C, three work in the central city, two in the community, and two in other suburbs; of Board D, only one goes to the central city, two work in other suburbs, two in community D.

The characteristics of the superintendents in the sample districts likewise show some interesting variations. District A changed superintendents during the study period because of the retirement of the long-time incumbent, but the change alters the picture only in respect to length of tenure and experience. Both District A superintendents and superintendent B hold doctorates; the former two came to their superintendencies from academic positions and had not been superintendents before. The retired District A man had held his position for thirty years. District B's superintendent has held his position for nineteen years and held another superintendency previously. All three (i.e., the two District A men and the one in District B) live in the districts that employ them. Superintendents C and D both hold Master's degrees. The former came to his job from another superintendency and has been in his present position for twelve years; the latter came from an assistant superintendency and has served Community D three years. Neither lives in his employing community. All the superintendents except B were recruited from positions outside Illinois, and all were educated primarily in the Midwest, though D took his Master's degree in the Southeast. Including the retired rather than the new District A man, Superintendents A and B thus have more formal education, longer tenure, and can probably fairly be described as being further along the career ladder. It is interesting to note that District A has twice, at thirty-year intervals, gone into rather unorthodox recruitment channels for superintendents.

The third class of formal actors in the decision-making systems of our sample boards is composed of technical staff. The notable variation among districts with respect to staffs is whether or not they participate. As the interaction analysis below will indicate, Districts A and B show considerable staff participation, Districts C and D do not. District A board meetings are regularly attended by a business manager, an assistant superintendent for curriculum, and a supervisor of grounds. All of these people are frequently drawn into board discussion, and in addition several principals and classroom teachers are usually present at the meetings. In District B, a business manager and a curriculum director are regular participants with the board, with several principals also usually in attendance at board meetings. As we noted in the preceding chapter, District B also has its board attorney in attendance at some meetings, including five of the eight the project staff observed.

District C, the smallest in the sample, has no business manager nor curriculum director, the superintendent in effect serving both of these functions. A principal often sits with the board, as did the head custodian on one occasion. Otherwise the board has no staff assistance except for the attorney, who was present at every board meeting observed. The District D superintendent in effect is also his own staff, and board meetings are not regularly attended by principals, teachers, or the board attorney. The last-named never appeared at board meetings, the others very rarely.

Patterns of interaction at board meetings.--In some sense the patterns of behavior at formal meetings lie at the heart of the governing process. This is especially so if our beliefs about the rarity of "irregular" decisional meetings, expressed earlier in this chapter, are true. This is not necessarily to hold that all important things that go on at the policy level in our sample organizations may be directly observed at board meetings. These meetings do, however, reveal a great deal about the relative styles and attitudes of the actors in the process, about the traditions, the focus of interests, and the modes of action of the systems. Rules that constrain behavior may never pass through the official validation process, and potential policy may be rejected without formal action at the board level. The latter, in fact, is one of the forms the agenda-setting activity may take. Still, most policy-making business shows up at some phase of the public conduct of board activity, even if only to be conspicuous by the summary treatment it receives. In many ways, then, it seems that cues about the decision-making process can be garnered from meeting observations; most obviously and importantly, matters of official policy do require the validation of public board approval.

Chapter I explained the means by which the project staff recorded patterns of interaction at board meetings. The picture of those meetings thus accumulated is neither so detailed nor so reliable as one might wish, but it does reveal a great deal about the comparative operation of the four districts. To these data may be added something in the way of impression about the subject.

Table 6 summarizes information about the general configuration of meetings in the four districts of our sample. It reveals that meetings are of substantially longer duration in B and C than in A and D. It might be mentioned here that the District B board also customarily meets twice a

TABLE 6

OVER-ALL BOARD MEETING DATA FOR FOUR SAMPLE DISTRICTS

	A	B	C	D
Average length of meeting (in minutes)...........	139	203	226	144
Interactions per minute	5.2	4.9	6.0	4.7
Mean interactions per meeting	720	1000	1359	682

month, and its total "output" of interactions is therefore understated by these average figures. District D moves at the most leisurely pace by our measure, and District C at the fastest. Observers' impressions suggest that these differences are what we might call matters of style. The rate of interaction in Board C is accounted for not so much by the fact that it processes a large amount of policy as by the rather disordered and detailed way in which some members of the board treat the business under discussion. The board in District D, on the other hand, operates at a slow pace, and a rather formal one. The articulate board of District A accomplishes much in a short period of time. The rate of interaction of Board B is depressed somewhat and its meeting time extended by the fact that it often begins its meetings with a presentation of 30 to 45 minutes' duration by a staff member on some aspect of the district's educational program. The length of Board C's meetings, and to a lesser but significant degree of Board B's, are probably attributable to the considerable internal conflict generated in these systems.

Further data, summarized in Table 7, indicate the distribution of participation in the business of the boards by various categories of actors. These too show interesting patterns of variation, some expected and some not. In all cases but C the board president participates at a slightly greater rate than the superindendent, a fact probably explained by the formal role of the president as meeting chairman, and by the role of conciliator played by all the presidents of the sample boards. Together, the president and superintendent of District D account for half of the total interactions, considerably more than for their counterpart actors in the other systems. There was almost no staff participation in this district, however, and this doubtless explains some of the disproportion. The D board itself is quiet though not particularly acquiescent.

TABLE 7

PROPORTION OF TOTAL MEETING INTERACTIONS ACCOUNTED FOR BY CATEGORIES OF ACTORS

Dist.	Total Interactions	Sup't.	Board Pres.	Admin.-Staff	Bal. Board	Board-Staff	Audience
A	(4321)	.17	.19	.05	.54	.01	.05
B	(5998)	.15	.16	.16	.46	.05	.02
C	(8155)	.16	.14	.02	.56	.07	.04
D	(4092)	.24	.27	.02	.44	.00	.03

Perhaps the notable feature of the distribution of participation in District B is the vastly greater proportion of staff interactions here than in the other districts. If the participation of the staff is added to that of the superintendent, the proportion of interactions originating with the administration considerably exceeds that of any of the others. In some sense the administrative role here is shared, with the business manager having a considerable independence. The other administrative staff members in District B are clearly responsible to the superintendent and the latter generally seems firmly in control of the administrative side of operations, however.

The balance of the board accounts for a substantially larger proportion of interactions in Districts C and A, with the former particularly showing a high level of board member activity. These two districts, again in that order, also show a higher proportionate participation by members of meeting audiences. This last point is deceptive, however. While audience participation in A was spread over a number of people and dealt with various topics, a very large proportion of the audience participation in C was by one man, an architect's representative, with whom the board had several long and conflictual exchanges. The low proportion of audience participations in District B grossly underplays the importance of the public in the meetings of that board.

Further refinement in this quantitative comparison of board activities can be gained from inspection of data on the character of the various actors' participation. Observers coded interactions by four categories: contributions, inquiries, positive comments, and negative comments. The last two we will treat below as indicators of the "atmosphere" of the decision process. The former two can give us an account of who says what kind of thing in board meetings.

Table 8 shows for each category of actors the proportions of interactions classified as contributions, inquiries, and positive and negative comments. Table 9 shows the proportions of each kind of interaction accounted for by the various categories of actors in each district. Table 8 sums by columns for each district, Table 9 by rows. These tables should be read against the background of Table 7 and the accompanying text, which convey information about the relative amounts of participation of each of the groups of actors.

The data in Table 8 indicate that the superintendents and boards in the sample districts are quite different as to their relative use of contributions and inquiries. The superintendents of Districts A and B "contribute" proportionately less, i.e., convey fewer items of information and opinion, and "question" proportionately more. As we pointed out above, the administrators in these districts are able to elicit contributions from a greater number of staff assistants, and thus to share the informational burden. Still, our interview data indicate that the superintentents in these districts no less than in C and D are identified by board members as the primary sources of information for decision-making. The point would seem to be that superintendents A and B are able to operate in a more subtle fashion, utilizing questions and soliciting opinions from others, while C and D rely more heavily on information and opinion to structure their dealings with the boards.

The main exception to the average board president's behavior is found in District D, where the president operates more through inquiry and less through contribution. It might also be noted that Board Presidents A and B were more "positive" in their conduct of business. The balance of the boards also vary somewhat across districts as to style of participation. In District D the board members utilize a disproportionate part of their

TABLE 8

PROPORTION OF TOTAL MEETING INTERACTIONS OF EACH CATEGORY OF ACTORS DISTRIBUTED BY KIND OF INTERACTION*

	Superintendent	Admin.-Staff	Board Pres.	Bal. of Board	Board-Staff	Audience
District A						
C	.73	.76	.57	.58	.90	.87
I	.10	.06	.27	.26	.05	.10
P	.16	.16	.15	.13	.05	.04
N	.02	.00	.01	.03	.00	.00
District B						
C	.70	.82	.51	.51	.69	.60
I	.09	.07	.31	.30	.17	.25
P	.17	.09	.17	.13	.11	.11
N	.03	.03	.01	.06	.04	.05
District C						
C	.86	.84	.61	.56	.76	.79
I	.04	.10	.32	.21	.17	.10
P	.01	.04	.03	.05	.02	.10
N	.10	.02	.04	.17	.04	.01
District D						
C	.89	.90	.50	.73	.00	.83
I	.06	.07	.44	.20	.00	.08
P	.04	.04	.05	.06	.00	.09
N	.01	.00	.01	.01	.00	.00

*These proportions sum by column for each district.

TABLE 9

PROPORTION OF EACH KIND OF TOTAL MEETING INTERACTIONS ACCOUNTED FOR BY VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF ACTORS*

	Superintendent	Admin.-Staff	Board Pres.	Bal. of Board	Board-Staff	Audience
District A						
C	.20	.06	.17	.50	.01	.06
I	.08	.01	.24	.66	.00	.01
P	.20	.05	.21	.51	.00	.03
N	.17	.00	.06	.72	.00	.00
District B						
C	.18	.22	.14	.39	.05	.02
I	.06	.05	.22	.61	.03	.02
P	.19	.11	.20	.45	.04	.01
N	.12	.10	.05	.67	.04	.02
District C						
C	.21	.02	.14	.49	.08	.07
I	.03	.01	.24	.63	.06	.03
P	.02	.02	.12	.66	.04	.14
N	.12	.00	.04	.80	.02	.01
District D						
C	.30	.03	.19	.46	.00	.03
I	.07	.01	.53	.39	.00	.01
P	.19	.02	.25	.50	.00	.04
N	.14	.00	.29	.57	.00	.00

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*These proportions sum by rows

relatively few interactions to make contributions. That is to say, although the members of Board D (excepting the president) do not participate very actively in board meetings, when they do participate it is more likely here than in other districts to be through contributions. District A and B board members, on the other hand, are significantly more likely to participate through inquiries than are the members of Boards C and D. In the audience column of Table 8 the notable feature is the much higher proportion of audience interactions devoted to questions in District B. This difference is explained by the fact that in Districts A, C, and D, audience participants were in effect usually "resource people" conveying information, while in B they tended to be people probing and often challenging district policy.

Table 9 summarizes the same data, but in a different fashion. It simply shows, for each board, which category of actors accounted for what proportion of the total contributions, inquiries, and positive and negative comments. This table reveals few striking differences among districts. Patterns in B and D are worth noting, however, as they reinforce some of the observations made earlier about board operations in those districts. The District B distribution of contributions shows heavy weighting toward the administrative staff and light participation by the board, especially the "balance of the board," i.e., the members other than the president. Otherwise this board appears much like Districts A and C, so far as the contributions and inquiries portions of the distributions are concerned. District D presents divergent distributions of both inquiries and contributions. Here the superintendent's proportionate contributions are greater by significant degree than those of his counterparts in other districts. The board president is also highest among the districts in proportion of contributions accounted for, but he is close to the president of District A.

The balance of the board in District D is accordingly low in proportion of contributions. In the inquiry category, this district distinguishes itself in the distribution of participation between president and other board members. Whereas in the other three districts the president accounted for slightly less than one-quarter of questions and the balance of the board for 61 to 66 per cent, in D the president asked 53 per cent and other members only 39. This again, might be ascribed to President D's style of leadership or to the quiet manner of his board. His questions are in good part proddings, efforts to keep the board involved in the proceedings of the meetings.

The atmosphere of decision-making.--Another dimension of the decision-making process is the "atmosphere" in which it is carried out, the tone of activities as distinct from their form or content. The importance of this aspect of things in an organizational system is rather obvious, although the concept is not a concise one. Without judging relative efficiency or quantity or quality of outputs, we would expect things to be done differently in systems with different systems of social relationships. In some respects organizational atmosphere is undoubtedly a matter of personalities, even in some places of the personality of one dominant actor in the system. However, atmosphere is also a cultural phenomenon, a reflection of the freedoms and constraints that surround individual action in the organizational setting.

The school boards of our sample each showed some distinctive characteristics of atmosphere. In good part the effort to describe the tone of the decisional process must rest on impression, on the sense observers carry away from the activity of board meetings. Atmosphere is also very closely related to institutional forms and to the characteristics of interaction patterns. Thus much about atmosphere is conveyed by what has been said earlier in this chapter about various features of the decision-making systems of the districts under study. Still, atmosphere seems to be a separable aspect of the lives of these organizations, one that reflects community setting and in turn is reflected by the substance of work done.

Some part of the quality we seek to describe is to be found in the interaction records prepared at board meetings. The comparative incidence of positive and negative participation indicates something of the tone of the process as business goes forward. Table 10 summarizes the relative occurrence of positive and negative comments as well as of contributions and inquiries in the sample districts. In the positive comment column, Districts A and B are clearly and significantly different from C and D, with District C being the lowest of the group. In a gross sense these differences probably reflect variations in the use of language, and a greater emphasis in the higher status districts on a positive, "human relations" approach to process management. They may very well reflect the communication facility engendered by education and by involvement in professional and managerial occupational routines. Negative comments comprise a far greater proportion of total interactions in District C than in the others of the sample, with District B also substantially higher than A and D. In C the proclivity for negativism seems more a style of action than a reflection of substantive conflict, while in B it probably grows mostly out of the persistent effect of confrontation over issues and the divisions among actors it has produced.

Again we may turn to Tables 8 and 9 to evaluate the relative styles and participation effects of categories of actors in the sample systems. Table 8 indicates the proportionate amount of their participations utilized by actors for positive and negative comments. It shows Districts A and B quite similar in most columns. In both of these districts the superintendents

TABLE 10

PROPORTION OF TOTAL MEETING INTERACTIONS BY KIND

District	N	Contribution	Inquiry	Positive Reaction	Negative Reaction
A	(4321)	.63	.22	.14	.02
B	(5998)	.60	.23	.14	.04
C	(8155)	.65	.19	.04	.12
D	(4092)	.71	.22	.06	.01

and board presidents are seen to use positive comments as a substantial portion of their totals, and other board members to be about the same from district to district in positive reactions. The principal differences between A and B are in the interactions of administrative staffs, where A is higher on positive and B on negative comments; on negative reactions from the balance of the board, where B is high; and on both positive and negative comments from the audience, where B is also high. Over-all, however, the similarities between these two districts are more striking than the differences.

Both C and D differ considerably from the patterns of A and B, and the former, like the latter, share several pattern characteristics. There are, however, major variations between C and D. On positive comments District D tends to be slightly higher than C all the way through, though systematically (except in the audience category) much lower than A and B. In negative comments District C tends to be higher than D, particularly so in superintendent, board president, and balance of board categories. For these three groups of actors District D was highest in proportion of negative reactions of all four districts. In summary, then, C and D are lower than A and B in proportion of positive comments across nearly all categories, and C is higher in proportion of negatives used by superintendent and board than any other district in the sample.

Table 9 shows who is responsible for positive and negative reactions within each district. In reading these data it should be remembered that we are dealing with relatively few interactions and relatively small proportions of the interaction totals. Significant variations are rather few. In District C the superintendent accounts for a smaller proportion of positive comments and the balance of the board for a higher proportion than in the other districts. This does not mean that the balance of the C board is positive in an absolute sense in comparison with other boards, but that of the positive entries in the district it contributes a larger share. The C board is higher in the share of negative contributions made and the superintendent low. District D's distribution of negative comments shows the board president higher than in other districts, and the balance of the board lower.

To these data on the use of positive and negative comments may be added impressions about the atmosphere of the systems gained from interviews, casual conversations, and observations. District A's board, as we have had occasion to note before, operates in a relaxed and rather informal way. The meetings move quickly, with lightness and often with levity. By and large the board members seem to enjoy their participation. All this is not to say that their duties are not taken seriously or performed in a deliberate manner. Yet this board certainly does not deliberate in the fashion of some of the others in the sample. When conflicts do arise they do not take on personal overtones or stay on the scene for long. A number of people in the system seem skilled in conflict management, including all of the board members save perhaps one or two. The superintendent, the board president, and one board member in particular are expert both at allaying potential conflict and bringing discussion into focus. This board member accounted for only slightly fewer interactions than the superintendent and the board president, though he is incisive rather than domineering. He was cited by the superintendent as unusually effective and helpful, someone "able to bring issues to a head and crystallize them when they tend to be flying around in the air. In addition, he speaks dispassionately and in a cool manner...." The District A board also appears to maintain friendly and informal relations with the administrative staff.

The District B system also includes a number of people with conflict-management skills, though not as many as in District A. Enough has been said heretofore, however, to indicate that there are sources and strains of conflict in the system, some introduced from outside the board and some from within. The atmosphere of the board is one of subtle tension. Conflict seldom rises to the surface, and when it does some members of the board, particularly the president and two others, usually move effectively to put it down. The superintendent in this district is sometimes effective in avoiding tension and sometimes not, and he is rather inclined toward impatience, on occasion arousing the ire of board members. For the most part, however, the board functions smoothly. Whether by design or otherwise, several techniques have been developed in this system to reduce the incidence of conflict situations. The procedures of operation tend to be rather formal, with parliamentary rules often invoked, more work is done through committees, and probably a larger number of questions are pre-decided. Major business appears to be placed toward the end of the agenda, which is sometimes not reached until after midnight. The implications of some of these methods for conflict management are understood by at least some members of the system. The over-all impression left by District B is that of an organization with most of the attributes and tastes required for conflict-free operation, but with severe pressure producing occasional cracks in the structure. This is a picture of a system undergoing substantial change.

The decision-making atmosphere of District C is rather starkly in contrast to that found in the other districts in the sample. While this district is not under any particular detectable pressure--financial, social, or ideological--it is easily the one with the greatest internal conflict, as the analysis of positive and negative interactions suggested. The meetings are highly informal, to the point that they often lack structure. Parliamentary procedure is sometimes ignored, much time is spent in argumentation, and few techniques for the reduction of conflict are in evidence. Meetings, as we noted above, are protracted and the interaction rate high. Discussion sometimes nears the point of personal bitterness, although the members of the district profess that the feelings developed in the meeting do not carry over beyond it. Both the board president and the superintendent try on occasion to bring matters into focus and keep the process even; the latter, however, appears to feel a good deal of pressure, for reasons having to do with role perceptions discussed below. He is often threatened and sometimes harassed by board members. In summary, the atmosphere in District C might be described as hostile and disordered, with the explanation seeming to lie in the paucity of organizational skills available and the perceptions actors have of an appropriate division of labor in the system.

District D presents yet another picture. As our data have previously shown, this board operates at a slow pace, without much negative interaction and without much positive either. The atmosphere of the board is formal, and it is seldom hostile. Meetings are short, and the superintendent and board president are unusually dominant. The latter sometimes seems a bit heavy-handed, but the former seldom so. The president especially takes a discussion-management role, urging attention to the business at hand and prodding action. It is interesting to observe that this board was formerly badly split and noted for internal conflict. Perhaps by the lessons learned in the past, perhaps because of the skills of the two principal actors, perhaps for other reasons it has suppressed its conflict and also its spirit. This is not to be seen as reflecting the board's views or behavior on the division of labor question. What we speak of here is the atmosphere, the climate in which the board does its work. Nor is it meant to imply indifference to responsibility, for such a judgment does not seem appropriate to the work of this district.

These comments on atmosphere suggest that it may have two dimensions, friendliness-hostility, and formality-informality. The districts in the sample might be placed in the four cells of a table constructed of these variables:

	Friendly	Hostile
Informal	A	C
Formal	D	B

Interestingly, the two higher-status districts, which we have described as having greater facilities of organizational skill and which share a great number of aggregate behavioral traits, fall into opposite corners. The reason for this we might ascribe to the very fact that District B has these skill resources to draw upon. District C, without much cause for hostility, remains hostile because it lacks the skills to reduce its internal conflict. District D, despite a friendly atmosphere, lacks the ability to achieve the effective informality of District A. District B's board, having hostility thrust upon it by pressures of community change, manages to maintain essential stability by use of the devices of formality. Thus, we would propose, the conflict-management resources question is crucial to the explanation of the atmosphere of decision-making in these four districts.

The choice process.--The patterns of interactions, structures, and roles that comprise a decision-making process come to a head in choice among possible rules, policies, or courses of action. This is not, of course, to say that such action brings the process to a halt, for the effects of authoritative action are much conditioned by what follows formal decision. It is also not to say, as we pointed out previously, that the process always issues in formal choice, for clearly there are many sidetracks to which items may be shunted. The making of choice by a policy body is, however, an important "lump" in its routine. At the same time, it is an activity that, in the case of the school districts of our sample, can be described rather briefly.

The means by which choices are usually validated in bodies of this kind are standard and familiar, namely, voice roll-call votes. These votes tend in fact to be matters of routine that tell little about the decisional styles of the districts. In most cases, even after extensive conflict votes are unanimous, and very rarely are outcomes close. The small size of the boards, of course, makes it possible for participants to gauge outcomes before formal votes are taken. Importance does attach to votes in terms of the establishment of a legal record, and all the boards observed are conscious to some extent of the damage that might be caused to their policies by legal action. Probably Boards B and C are the most cautious in this respect. The voting process also doubtless has behavioral consequences as an implicit means of forcing eventual decision, but these would seem to be common rather than variable properties of the organizations under study.

Some differences in style among the districts are detectable in the voting process. In District A the development of consensus is so effective that voting seems a very unimportant, quite unobtrusive part of board activity. During the period of observation of this board only two negative votes were cast on any roll call. The first, cast by a new member, was the occasion for astonishment on the part of those present and an almost apologetic explanation to the observers by the board president: "You've seen a very rare thing. Negative votes are hardly ever cast around here." The second negative, several meetings later, was cast by one of the women board members who was asked by her incredulous colleagues if she really meant it and if she wanted it recorded that way. These occurrences were clearly exceptional. The District A board knows its mind and scarcely feels the need for the formal validation procedure to congeal policy.

The District B board, in keeping with its more formal style, places more emphasis on voting and on the observance of parliamentary niceties, although one senses here some of the feeling of the District A board that the decision is well-understood without the roll call itself. Negative votes are more frequently heard in B than in A, and they do not elicit reactions that verge on shock. In District C much more symbolic importance attaches to the vote. Here the secretary actually does call the roll and the members seem to appreciate the occasion, perhaps because it is one of the few points where meetings assume structure. Even in C, however, the proportion of negative votes on roll calls is not high. In District D, again, some but not many "no" votes are cast. As in C, the D board, however, has the roll called formally and seems to value the dignity and accomplishment it symbolizes. In Districts C and D one might guess that voting behavior tends to grow more out of conscience and a sense that this is what one must do for his constituency, rather than out of sensitivity to consensus and the desire to avoid conflict.

The choice process is closely related to another aspect of organizational life that is in itself related to information, to agenda-setting, to atmosphere, and to division of labor, i.e., the process of recommending. The administrator is by all odds the person in the best position to recommend; as the next chapter will argue, his role in the decision-making system is in large part that of recommender, and his success in his job might be measured by the extent to which his recommendations are acted upon. All the superintendents in the sample recommend, and all with much effect, though their styles and efficacies differ. Superintendent A states his recommendations on the agenda--in capital letters. The board seldom fails to follow his cue; the only exception during the observation period was not an item rejected but one put aside until, as it happened, it turned out to be moot. Superintendent B is often asked for recommendations and gives them freely. His, too, are usually accepted, though with somewhat less regularity. Board C is neither so eager to have nor so willing to follow the lead of its superintendent, and often pecks away at his program by turning him down on small matters. District D's superintendent tends to push his recommendations with a board that is rather inclined to hold back some of its prerogative to make the final choice. For reasons to be explored in the next chapter, the superintendent is in the large share of cases in a position to make his will heard, and felt. Insofar as this is true, his recommendations become a stage--a critical stage--in the process of decision-making.

Interactions between formal meetings.--A final aspect of the decision-making process is the interaction among participants outside the setting of formal meetings. The members of each board are, of course, residents of a community; none of these communities is large and all are suburban in character. One would expect that socially or otherwise board members' paths would cross and they would develop active networks of communication. For many members, too, the school board is their principal community activity and the focus of much pride and interest. The occasional formal board session, committee meeting, or informational gathering might be supposed not to satisfy their thirst for participation. Such expectations as these are not generally borne out by the evidence.

There are numerous possible combinations of communication among the categories of actors in these school systems. We shall confine our attention to two general levels: communication between superintendent and board members, and among board members themselves. Our comments on this matter are based on interview data.

As to contacts of superintendents and board members, the districts of our sample appear to have one thing in common, fairly frequent discussions between the administrator and the board president. The latter reports from one to as many as ten contacts a week. Beyond this, styles differ. The District A superintendent is chary of communication with individuals on the board, preferring to present matters to the entire group at its formal sessions. As a result, extra-meeting conversations involving the superintendent are few; the women on the board seem to have some more contacts than the men with the administration but even these are sparse. The board president reported communications with the superintendent "about five times a month." Board members indicated that there was also little communication among themselves between meetings, excepting in some unusual circumstance. Thus between board sessions the District A board seems to carry on little school business involving interaction.

In District B the incidence of interactions on both levels is somewhat heavier but still not frequent. The board president and superintendent talk "once or twice a week." Board members who are committee chairmen may hear from the superintendent now and then, usually, as one of them put it, on "management-type problems"; there seem to be few contacts on educational questions, about specific teachers, or on special complaints or requests from individual constituents. The board members talk among themselves, but except for the president apparently not often. They report contacts once every week or two.

In District C the board president talks with the superintendent "four or five times a week." Most of the other board members also are in touch with the superintendent often, perhaps once a week. These conversations cover a wide range of subjects; members mention, among other things, discipline, supplies, maintenance, hiring, salaries, teacher-student problems, "a specific teacher," "kitchen equipment repair." In this respect again the members of Board C demonstrate their concern for detail and their vigilant attitude toward school business. The comments of the administrator suggest that he finds this attention not entirely helpful. Board members other than the president do not seem to have much contact about school business with their colleagues, excepting two employed by the same firm. Formerly out-of-meeting communications among board members were common in this district, so much so that the administrator sometimes held the agenda until just before the meeting to prevent pre-decisions by a few board members who acted through private consultations of their own.

The District D superintendent also talks with his board members a considerable amount--with the president five to ten times a week, with some others on the board about once a week. Interview responses indicate that these contacts may deal with a great variety of school business. More of the calls in District D originate with the superintendent, and rather than a source of annoyance to him they seem to be part of his process management strategy. Again, lateral communications among members between meetings are rare with this board.

The materials presented in this chapter describe in a comparative way the decision-making structures and processes of our four sample districts. A major element in this picture, probably the major element, is the pattern of relationships between board and administration. On this subject further differences among the districts can be found, differences crucial to the determination of decision-making styles. These relationships will be the focus of our discussion in the chapter to follow.

CHAPTER V

AUTHORITY RELATIONSHIPS AND THE DIVISION OF LABOR

Much of our discussion to this point has dealt in one way or another with the interrelationships of the superintendents and boards of the sample districts. At least at the "policy" level, every important part of the school decision-making process involves them as principal actors. They are not, by any means, the only important people to be found on the scene, but they are usually not far from the center of things. Many of the main features of school government can be described in terms of the relative roles they play, in terms of the way they divide responsibilities for the operation of their systems. The problems inherent in the relationships between board and superintendent are neither new nor unique, we might note, to the government of education. In this chapter we turn our attention to the varying ways in which the study districts have worked out the division of labor and responsibility between boards and administrators. Thus, our central concern is with the patterns of mutual expectation and acquiescence that are to be found in the social, political, and institutional environments in which these systems operate.

Types of authority.--In one sense the differences between superintendents and board members are rooted in the fact that they represent different types of authority. By authority we mean here the quality that makes it possible for one person to induce others to do what he wants them to do.

Analysts of organizational life have pointed out that authority can derive from a variety of characteristics of actor, situation, and relationship. Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson, for example, write of the authority of confidence, the authority of identification, the authority of sanctions, and the authority of legitimacy.[1] Rather than Simon's four categories, we shall refer to two--rank authority and bureaucratic technical authority. These terms identify the major sources of influence of the board membership and superintendency respectively. The question to which we wish to address ourselves is the relative parts the holders of such authority play in the conduct of school decision-making business.

The authority of school board members is essentially based on the mode by which they are selected, i.e., on the democratic process. By cultural agreement (including the standards set by higher levels of government) those chosen through this means are accorded the right to make binding rules for the community, within, of course, understood limits. Thus these are people who are vested with position or rank; they are set off in a hierarchical relationship to the rest of the society insofar as the political function is concerned. This conception of authority is clearly related to the notion of legitimacy, and it probably reflects some need for an identity or certainty upon which order in the community may seem to be based. At any rate, it is part of the paraphernalia that go along with civil society.

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[1] Herbert A. Simon, Donald W. Smithburg, and Victor A. Thompson, Public Administration (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958). Among the most helpful classic discussions of this and related issues, see Max Weber, Theory of Social and Economic Organization, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), esp. pp. 324-336; Chester I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938). See also Robert L. Peabody, Organizational Authority: Superior-Subordinate Relationships in Three Public Service Organizations (New York: Atherton Press, 1964); for a recent discussion of the literature, see Dorwin Cartwright, "Influence, Leadership, and Control," in James G. March, ed., Handbook of Organizations (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

The authority of the school board also derives, but in a secondary way, from sanctions. As it has the formal responsibilities, it is also given the ultimate tools with which it may enforce its will, especially within the confines of its own decision and administrative system. Thus the board has recognized power to impose penalties, including dismissal, on the administrators, teachers, and students in the system, again within limits such as those embodied in tenure rules. Board members may also hold authority by virtue of the confidence others have in their ability and judgment, though this is not necessarily the case. Democratic offices are sometimes sought through a process that presumably gives candidates a chance to demonstrate their competence in handling the duties the offices entail. This is the presumed function of the political campaign, or at least part of its function. In school elections generally, the campaign is usually a very much attenuated process, and the matter of competence is either assumed or ignored, though such pre-selection devices as the caucus may be designed to raise the confidence level without public competition for votes. The main element in school board authority remains, however, the quality of rank, the formal holding of office through designated selection processes.

The authority of the school superintendent, on the other hand, is primarily based on expertise, on his command of the technical subject-matter of the decision-making process. To be sure, the superintendent also occupies a hierarchical position, and he derives a certain legitimacy from his relationship to the board. This position is recognized in law, and it is also likely to be recognized in opinion. Primarily, however, what he accomplishes depends on his "professional" qualities, on the fact that by training and experience he is supposed to know and be able to do things that others cannot.[2] In the case of the school superintendent this expertise is validated by a formal state certification process.

The authority of the superintendent is not only technical but also bureaucratic. This authority is distinct from though, in the case of superintendents, intertwined with that of technical competence. As chief bureaucrat the superintendent is keeper of the rules and records, transmitter of messages, trainer of personnel. He is the apex of the bureaucratic sub-hierarchy within the system. While his job may require expertise, too, as a bureaucrat he has authority because of his control over things other people wish to use, e.g., information, channels of communication, and staff assistance.

Some general characteristics of authority relationships in school systems.--On these foundations the relationships of school boards and superintendents are built. Some aspects of these relationships might be expected to grow out of the differences in basis of authority between the two kinds of office, and some out of the institutional framework in which they are set. The following paragraphs are in a sense hypothetical, that is, they set out some expectations about behavior derived from these factors. Thereafter we will discuss empirical variations found in the specific settings of our four test districts.

The formal relationship of board and superintendent does not tell us much that has not been said above. The board is "sovereign in its sphere;" within the limits set by the state (and by the national government, e.g., through the equal protection clause) it is free and responsible to run the schools as it sees fit. It hires and may fire the superintendent (though the question of his tenure within the system is apparently not settled), and he is obliged to do its bidding. In behavior terms he may not be so dependent, but in formal legal terms he is. If the superintendent tends to be stronger in relation to his board than the city manager to his council, it is because the rôle and professional status of the former have been recognized longer and he has developed firmer defenses in tradition and usage.[3]

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[2] Cf. H. Thomas James, "The Nature of Professional Authority," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (November, 1959), 45-58.

Behind these formal relationships stands an array of equipment with which boards and superintendents confront their jobs. As their authority bases differ, so does their relative access to the tools by which decisions are made and the organization controlled. A few of the circumstances that surround the process of school government are particularly pertinent to the division of labor and may usefully be summarized in general terms. They are described below chiefly through reference to the characteristics of the superintendent's job.

1. Knowledge. By dint of training and experience the superintendent is in possession of knowledge not likely to be held or acquired by the lay board. Some of this knowledge may be esoteric, some of it even mythical, i.e., the manufactured insight of a guild, some of it may be simple acquaintance with the day-to-day facts of organizational or community life. But it is a rare superintendent who cannot outmatch his board fact-for-fact about the operation of the local system and about the field of education in general. Education, like other aspects of life, goes forward in a complex and rapidly changing world. What once was a rudimentary process of face-to-face instruction in the use of a few basic tools now involves vast numbers, a highly interdependent social base, a complicated politico-legal environment, and constantly shifting technologies. Thus knowledge becomes an ever more essential part of the equipment of those who would make decisions that deal effectively with the world, including its educational needs.

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[3] See R. J. Snow, op. cit.

2. Professional stature. The superintendent also has the validation of professional stature in a society where professional stature has come to be highly valued. Professional stature may be based on the presumption of expertise, though the two do not necessarily go along together. While we are not in a position to say on empirical evidence how the superintendent stands in our sample communities, generally speaking his position carries some of the kind of intrinsic respect accorded doctors, scientists, college professors, etc. The specialization and division of labor of contemporary society doubtless enhance this effect, as do the organized and individual efforts of many professional people themselves. Professionalism is a quality cherished in superintendents by many school boards (as witness the widespread tendency to use the title "doctor"), as it gives the boards, too, defenses against the outside world. Whether this respect is merited by or permanently accorded to some given professional is a separate question.

3. Time. By virtue of his position the superintendent has time to give to the problems and processes of school government. The board membership is a part-time role held by people whose occupational, community, and family responsibilities are likely to be heavy. Board members in our sample profess to spend from four or five to sixty hours per month outside formal board meetings on school business, with the mode falling somewhere around ten. Even at its most extreme, board membership thus carries far less time commitment to the system than does the position of superintendent.

4. Duration in office. Ordinarily speaking, the superintendency of a given incumbent outlasts the service of nearly all board members. In a given sample there are, of course, exceptions, either short tenures for superintendents or extraordinarily long ones for board personnel. Usually, however, the superintendent was there when the members came to the board and will still be there when they leave. This means that he "knows" what has been done in the past and will have to live with what is done now.

5. Staff assistance. As chief of the school bureaucracy, the superintendent has staff assistance, including expertise, at his disposal. For him this assistance can be both an information extender and a time extender. The board member may have assistance, to be sure, on either a private basis (e.g., the business secretary or the conscientious wife) or through access to the school staff. Rarely, however, does he have expert staff as accessible to him as it is to the administrator. School board associations may provide board members with a certain amount of help, but this can seldom be responsive and adaptable to individual situations and needs.

6. Unity. Finally, the school superintendency has unity. In many places the superintendent is a sub-system in himself. Even in those places where other staff members sit with the board the superintendent tends to speak for the administration in clear and certain terms. The board is divided by its very structure; the presidency may provide some hierarchical cohesion, but the board president seems usually to be regarded as "first among equals." Furthermore, board membership in a formal way takes its meaning from the collectivity. Thus while administrations usually speak with one voice, boards tend to speak with many.

These factors tend to enhance the role of the superintendent in the governing process. Their effects are not inexorable, for they may be more or less used in the behavior patterns of specific systems. It is on such sources as these, however, that superintendents draw for operational strengths. These are not, we might take note, sources that are confined to the role of expert in the school system alone, for similar characteristics are to be found in the positions of bureaucrat-technicians in many kinds of organizations in contemporary society. As the social and technological world grows more complex and requires that even more expertise be brought to bear on it, we might expect that the importance of such factors as these will grow in all sectors of society. Their influence may be particularly magnified in the schools by the focussed character of the educational function, the advanced professionalization of education, and some of the traditions that surround schools in America, but the power of technicians and bureaucrats in educational life seems only a specific manifestation of a more general phenomenon. Along with this phenomenon comes the very difficult problem of democratic control, one of the most pressing issues in politics today.

The division of work in the sample districts.--The foregoing discussion may suggest that superintendents and school boards are engaged in a zero-sum competition for power over decisions, but this is not its intent. They can be seen as authorities with different bases, different tools, and different capacities to participate in the work of running the schools. We are interested in the question, who does what part of the job in our sample districts? For evidence on this question we may draw on perceptions of school officials conveyed in interviews and on the data gathered by observation of board meetings. Chapter I described the division of labor instruments utilized in connection with all superintendent and board interviews, one asking respondents their perception of the way work is divided in the district on thirteen decisional items, the other their notion of an ideal arrangement. These yield considerable information about the division of labor as participants see it.[4]

The evidence we have already presented about decision-making indicates that the superintendent exercises a considerable prerogative in all phases of the process. This is, as the previous section of this chapter suggests, a base-line against which our discussion may be set. While the districts in the sample do show variation, in each one of them the administrator has, by any measure, a great amount of initiative and control. In all the districts the superintendent sets the agenda, and in most instances his agenda effectively defines the flow of business, Districts C and B showing occasional exceptions. In all of the districts, too, he is quite clearly, by expectations and behavior, the principal information agent, although all boards cultivate some supplementary information channels and some cultivate more, especially on matters of community structure and demand. Furthermore, in every district in the sample the superintendent recommends courses of action, again with the districts showing some variation among themselves. The superintendent in District A, it will be recalled from the preceding chapter, appears to recommend on all policy questions, and he states his recommendations in unmistakeable terms. Superintendent B recommends, nearly always clearly and with effect, while Superintendent D operates (and probably must operate) in a more tentative fashion. The superintendent in District C is by all odds in the weakest position in this respect.

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[4] On the perception of role the landmark work is Gross, Mason, and McEachern, Explorations in Role Analysis, op. cit. While our attempt to measure division of labor is somewhat different from theirs in purpose, it drew heavily on their work as reported.

In more specific terms, Table 11 gives a summary of the estimates of actors in the various systems of the methods by which different kinds of business are handled. For each item but one, number four, the respondents were given a set of four alternative descriptions, plus an "other" category. Number four, the budget question, was given five possible answers, plus the "other" entry. Respondents who checked "other" were asked to explain the method to which it referred, and these answers were coded into the closest established category or coded as a half value if they fell between two of the set choices. The answers provided for each item scaled as follows:

TABLE 11

PERCEPTIONS OF DIVISION OF LABOR-- MEAN RESPONSE BY ITEM

	District A			District B			District C			District D		
	Bd. Resp.	Supt. Resp.	Var.[a]	Bd. Resp.	Supt. Resp.	Var.[a]	Bd. Resp.	Supt. Resp.	Var.[a]	Bd. Resp.	Supt. Resp.	Var.[a]
1. Hiring	3.25	4	.563	4.00	4	0.0	2.17	2.5	.109	2.64	4	2.43
2. Building	2.92	3	.006	2.79	3	.044	2.75	3	.013	3.07	4	.865
3. Textbook	3.75	4	.063	3.71	4	.084	3.57	4	.185	3.79	4	.441
4. Budget[b]	3.08	4	.846	3.57	4	.109	2.88	4	1.390	3.64	4	.130
5. Instruction	3.25	3	.063	3.07	3	.005	2.92	3	.006	3.00	3	0.0
6. Public relations	2.83	3	.029	3.43	3	.185	2.83	3	.029	3.50	4	.250
7. Teachers' grievances	3.50	3	.25	3.43	3	.185	3.50	4	.250	3.57	3	.325
8. Use of pupils	3.33	4	.449	3.14	4	.740	3.25	4	.563	2.93	3	.005
9. School property	2.92	3	.006	3.00	3	0.0	1.67	1	.382	2.93	3	.005
10. Maintenance	3.25	4	.563	3.29	4	.504	2.83	4	1.370	3.71	4	.084
11. Attend. reg.	3.83	4	.029	3.71	4	.084	3.67	2.5	1.370	3.86	4	.020
12. Salaries	3.50	4	.250	3.14	4	.740	3.25	2.5	.563	3.71	4	.084
13. Initiative	2.83	3	.029	2.86	3	.020	1.67	4	5.43	1.93	3	1.140
Mean	3.23	3.54	.242	3.32	3.54	.208	2.84	3.192	.525	3.25	3.615	.176

[a] Variance between board average and superintendent responses, computed by formula $\frac{\text{SUM (Bd. Resp.-Supt. Resp.)}^2}{13}$.

[b] Constant 1 subtracted from all responses on this item.

Value 4: business in question is handled entirely by the superintendent

3: business in question is handled by both, but with the superintendent clearly taking the lead

2: business in question is handled by both, but with the board clearly taking the lead

1: business in question is handled by the board

Specific wording of questions and response choices may be found in Appendix D.

This table, which averages board responses and reports those of administrators by items, offers several comparative dimensions. An average or response above 2.5 indicates a perception of division of labor that leans toward exercise of the particular function by the superintendent. In other words, a higher value indicates a greater superintendency role. On several items there is substantial agreement among districts, though with superintendents tending to go consistently higher in response than boards. Generally, however, superintendents are reported to have very wide latitude in respect to the adoption of textbooks, the handling of teacher grievances, and enforcement of attendance regulations. Their latitude is reported to be least in development of building program, in permitting community groups to use school property, and in the more general and vague matter of taking policy initiative. On the other subject-matter items there tends to be more variation from district to district.

In terms of over-all averages Districts A, B, and D are very similar in response patterns, with D slightly higher in the estimates of both the superintendent and the board. District C falls substantially lower by the estimate of both sets of respondents. The variance between average responses of boards and superintendents is greatest in District C and lowest in D, with the other two falling between. The average responses would seem to indicate that Superintendents A, B, and D have very great freedom to deal with the work of their districts, across nearly all sorts of substantive problems. While Superintendent C's freedom is estimated to be less, his board still rates the division of work, by the average of all responses, well above the 2.5 point of equal division. Analysis of these data in more detail, and in the light of interview comments and observations, reveals some interesting differences in specific aspects of the division of work.

District A has been described above as one with a very low-conflict decision-making situation and a generally smooth-running and effective system. Over-all, it is probably the smoothest-functioning of any district in the sample, as its situation seems more stable and better understood by its participants than those of B and D, and certainly than those of C. The board (and the community) regard their superintendents (both the outgoing and the incoming ones) as top-flight professionals, and board members expect to be led. Thus one member of the board said,

> ...a good administrator has the board going along with him all the time. He does all the selecting, whether the board knows it or not, and I have never known of a contest over an administrative recommendation on text selection, personnel selection, etc. There may be some occasions where you would overrule a person on such matters as hiring or firing, but you wouldn't with somebody like Dr. A. Generally, when we have a problem the superintendent comes in and tells us about it and says here's what I would do about it. Usually we make a motion and say it sounds fine and go along with it.

As one of the members in the district said, "A school system will reflect the views of the superintendent, particularly if he is a strong executive."

The flexibility with which this board approaches the superintendent's role is reflected in the following comment: "A never laid down any hard and fast rules. This, I think, is one of his strong points. Some members wanted occasionally to find out if we didn't have any regulations down on paper, but I think that this situation was one of A's strong points." Given the temper of the system and the long service of the outgoing superintendent, policies were in effect kept in his head. On the matter of leadership a member said, "We look to the superintendent to be a leader.... There is a real sensitivity that the job is the superintendent's and there's no vying for or usurping his authority or telling him what to do." Such comments as these seem to convey the sense of the people on the District A board about the way their work gets done.

Examination of the Table 11 data for District A suggests that the system has a strong superintendency and a self-confident board. Like all the other boards, this one averaged lowest on item 13, policy initiative. The variance between board and superintendent estimates was greatest on budget preparation, on hiring, and on building maintenance. On all these items, however, the average board response was well over three, i.e., leaned strongly toward administration responsibility. Patterns of interaction and the atmosphere at board meetings strongly support the conclusion that in this district the superintendent has much decision latitude and initiative and that the relationship is well and sympathetically understood by all.

In District B the division of labor appears to be much the same objectively, but somewhat more tentative in terms of understanding and acceptance. As we have had many occasions to observe, this system feels the effects of pressure and division, and these seem to be taking some toll of the superintendent's freedom of movement. Interestingly, however, the variance between board and superintendent's descriptions of the division of labor was slight, the largest amounts showing on recommendations for salary increases and relationships with community organizations that wish to use groups of pupils for programs, etc. Here again the board's average estimate of the superintendent's decision latitude is lowest on building plans and on policy initiative. The superintendent is reported to have complete control over hiring teachers, and he scores high on textbook adoptions, attendance regulations, and budget-making.

These data suggest that the superintendent in District B is in as strong a position in respect to policy role as District A's. Interview responses temper the picture somewhat, indicating much latitude for the superintendent but with an admixture of misgivings. A leader on the board said, "There's a good understanding of policy responsibilities of the board and the professional administrative responsibilities we look to the administration for. One of the problems is a tendency on the part of several board members to involve or concern themselves with administrative matters with which I think they should not be concerned." On instructional policies specifically, a board member commented, "Well, we hire professionals and this is a professional area and I hope to God that the board isn't foolish enough to get involved in this professional area. We have no right to be in it." On the other hand, one member said that "Some feel that the superintendent's views may be imposed too much on the board," and another said that he was developing more and more "questions to ask the administration." As we had occasion to say earlier about atmosphere, it would appear that this district maintains its basic style in the division of labor, but with increasing difficulty.

In division of work as in so many other matters, District C presents the greatest deviation from the norms of the sample. The variance between superintendent's and board members' responses was great, and the estimates of the administrator's role unusually low. On three items the board's average sank below 2.5, those involving hiring of teachers, use of school property, and policy initiative. On eight items of the total 13, the board's average estimate was lower than three.

Board members often conveyed the idea in interviews that the superintendent's freedom of action is limited. As one said, "The board is extremely conscientious and likes to go into things fully." Another said, "The total approach as given by the superintendent is not always accepted." One comment that summarized the situation in the district very well ran,

> A lot of times we just go into absolutely too much detail about the things we discuss.... I'll say this, there are districts which are run by the superintendent, where the board is nothing but a rubber stamp, and others where the board does too much, where they don't leave the superintendent enough room to operate, and I think we're at /the latter/ end of the scale.

Both in meetings and in interviews the members of the board evince great interest in some of the specifics of school operation. Thus one of them told the interviewer about "my lunchroom" and another talked at some length about his participation in maintenance matters. These identifications seem to arise through committee chairmanships, through a general attitude toward the scope of the board's work, and through occupational expertise. In many ways this board keeps a close check on the administrator's conduct of district business. More than once at board meetings lengthy discussions revolved around such matters as the propriety of someone in the administration having made a $2.40 telephone call. One member of the board told the interviewer that this superintendent is "...particularly mad at us now because he wants to hire teachers and we won't let him."

At the same time, the focus of the board is so likely to fall on detail and on certain kinds of problems (especially those having to do with physical plant) that the superintendent seems to have a great deal of implicit or unnoticed freedom to deal with educational matters. Perhaps the following comment from a board member conveys the over-all sense of this ambiguous and contentious situation: "The school board runs the school district. The superintendent is for the teachers, the board is for the people in the area. We are very conscientious /sic/ of the people in this district." The superintendent is in a way, then, seen by the board as a sort of shop steward representing the educators. What the latter can do quietly, without raising difficult problems, they do without much board interference. What the board sees as money or physical plant problems it likes to discuss and manage in its own way. On some of these matters it simply has not the knowledge, skill, or unity to be effective. In this fashion the sphere of operations of the superintendent is circumscribed, but its perimeter is constantly being tested both from his side and from the side of the board.

District D's is also an ambiguous situation, but in a rather different way. The quantitative data on division of labor show it to record the highest scores on both board average response and superintendent's response, and the lowest board-administrator average variance. It would appear from this that Superintendent D's decision latitude is the widest in the sample. In some ways this is probably true, in some it is clearly not. The functions of textbook adoption, handling teachers' grievances, and enforcing attendance regulations are regarded as being largely in the superintendent's hands in this district as in the others. In addition, by the estimate of the board, in most cases shared by the superintendent, he has unusually great authority as respects building programs, the budget, public relations, maintenance, and teachers' salaries. On the other hand, he ranks low on teacher hiring and on the item on general policy initiative. It is interesting and perhaps significant that both Districts C and D scored very low on these last two items in terms of average board response.

Over-all, the situation in District D would appear to be one where a very effective administrator has assumed an extraordinary share of the decision-making work, but where the board is not entirely comfortable with the situation. This is not to suggest that the board is displeased, but rather that it is somewhat confused about its own proper role. Thus board members will not or cannot admit that the superintendent predominates in the initiation of policy when the question is stated in a rather abstract way, in contrast to the boards in Districts A and B, whose responses were much higher on item 13. Teacher hiring, on the other hand, perhaps seems to them a specific and tangible act in which by their own estimate they are able to make themselves felt. This is, it should be noted, the point of greatest variance between average board and superintendent responses in D.

Other evidence seems to support this interpretation. In interviews board members expressed respect for the superintendent and general approbation of the job he is doing. At the same time, some wish for a more effective board participation. Thus one board member said,

> Sometimes I feel we might be a little hasty in taking the superintendent's recommendation. Sure, he's closer to most matters, but I think a person should take a little time to look into things. We feel so often that we're just lay people and not as close as he is and take the easy way out by accepting his recommendation.

Another told the interviewer,

> I feel that the school board should make more important decisions than paying the bills, that their prime interest should be in formulating policy to run the district, and that they should be better-informed in curriculum so that they can make decisions on the quality of the education to be used in their district.

A minor incident at a board meeting seemed to the observer to typify the ambivalence in this district about the division of labor. The superintendent asked the board to raise the dollar limit to which he was empowered to make certain kinds of expenditures without board approval. The request seemed modest, especially in light of the fact that the old limit had been set years earlier when dollars bought much more. The board, however, treated the matter as a major policy problem, discussed it at great length, and finally gave the superintendent just half the limit increase he had requested. The solution seemed to have no particular rational merit, but it appeared to give most board members a sense of satisfaction. During the discussion board members were careful to say that they did not mean to reflect on the present superintendent in a personal way, but they expressed much concern to preserve the responsibility of the board. Their action seemed a rather niggling half-measure. On other occasions the board showed a penchant for exploring details, and seldom spent time on broad policy.

In summary, what these comparative accounts of the division of responsibilities seem to suggest is (a) that by and large administrators tend to carry as much of the work load as our theory would lead us to expect, and, (b) that there are variations among districts in the extent to which the administrator has decision latitude and policy initiative. Among the higher status districts, in which we predicted a high technical-bureaucratic share in the decision-making work of the system, District A conforms to expectations and appears to be stable and easy with its relationships. District B, a community undergoing change and unaccustomed organizational experiences, preserves its predicted behavioral patterns, but less comfortably and with some evidences of instability. Among the lower status districts, C fulfills our expectations of less technical-bureaucratic participation and more evidence of distrust of administrative authority. District D falls further from our pattern of expectations than the others. This is a system that has seemingly undergone change itself, over a relatively short period of years, moving toward a more and more administration-centered operation. Still it preserves some of the disquiet and misgivings of the lower status place toward the situation in which it finds itself. Perhaps more than anything else the division of work in this district illustrates the potential of technical authority wielded by a skillful practitioner. It may also illustrate the chastening effect of "political" conflict that rises to the crisis level, which District D experienced a year before the employment of the present superintendent. This man, employed by a badly divided board, may have benefitted much in terms of decision latitude from the skill with which he stepped into a rather chaotic situation. Thus while District D has many of the attributes of decision-making style of the high conflict model, in terms of dividion of labor it has moved a considerable distance from it.

The use of the supplementary instrument asking respondents their opinions about how the 13 items of business should be handled makes it possible to construct an index of board and superintendent "satisfaction" with the situation in their districts. Table 12 summarizes the administrator and board average responses about "ideal" arrangements and reports the variance of each from the index of the "perceived" division of labor. Inspection of these data reveal some interesting relationships, and for the most part they reinforce the interpretation we have offered above. In all cases but District C the board's ideal average is lower than its perceived average, i.e., in all districts but C the board would ideally see the division of work tipped more away from the superintendent and more toward itself. Magnitudes of dissatisfaction differ, however, Board A, judged in terms of all its answers taken collectively, would alter present arrangements only slightly, Board D somewhat more, and Board B considerably more. Board C, on the other hand, would in aggregate terms see the functions of the superintendent enhanced, i.e., would see him exercise a somewhat greater part in the conduct of district business. In summary, this measure suggests that the District A board is considerably the best-satisfied with things as they are and most oriented toward technical-bureaucratic authority in its views of ideal arrangements. Board B would prefer to retract somewhat from its present commitment to technical-bureaucratic control of business. Board C feels the pull toward greater administrator involvement, but is still the most "conservative" in its ideas of an optimal set of relationships. Board D, having come very far (and we may infer very quickly) toward administrative dominance would retreat from its advanced position and reestablish some greater board participation.

TABLE 12

AVERAGES OF BOARD MEMBERS' AND SUPERINTENDENTS' RESPONSES ON PERCEIVED AND IDEAL DIVISION OF LABOR, WITH AVERAGE PERCEIVED-IDEAL VARIANCES

	Board Average			Administrator		
District	Perceived[b]	Ideal	Variance[a]	Perceived[b]	Ideal	Variance[a]
A	3.33	3.25	.320	3.62	3.62	0.0
B	3.38	3.06	.709	3.62	3.50	.057
C	2.82	3.00	.769	3.27	3.69	.903
D	3.41	3.18	.479	3.69	3.50	.326

[a] Calculated by formula $\frac{\text{SUM } (P-I)^2}{13}$. This figure represents the average of respondents' variances, not the variance between total averages.

[b] These averages are slightly higher than those reported at the bottom of Table 11 because for the present calculation the constant 1 was not subtracted from responses on item 4, "budget." Relative positions remain the same.

Administrators A and B are highly satisfied as their attitudes are measured by these scores. A, in fact, expressed no doubts about the preferability of things as they are in his district. Both B and C would have greater board participation, the former in very mild degree. C, apparently often frustrated at the circumscription of his operating latitude by the board, would ideally see himself much more free than he now is to take the initiative in board business.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONTENTS AND OUTPUTS OF THE POLICY PROCESS

Two remaining elements in the political process--its substantive content and its policy outputs--have appeared incidentally or by implication here and there in the preceding pages. These subjects are distinct but closely enough interrelated to justify their treatment in a single chapter. They comprise in some sense the "meat" of politics, the stuff around which political activity revolves. This is not to say that politics takes its only meaning from the substantive policies it emits; the sense of order in the polity itself, the motivations for which people engage in political activity, its bureaucratic life, etc., may be quite detachable from its substance. If it were possible to measure relative importances with accuracy, some systems would doubtless show that policy itself was a relatively minor element in the entire picture. Nonetheless, it remains an element, as political systems provide services and rules of behavior to their constituent communities.

It might be well to note some factors that condition the content and output of the particular decision-making systems we are examining. These are factors that in one degree or another differentiate "educational polities" from "municipal" polities and from other sorts of local units of government. They can be summed up in three points.

1. The substantive concerns of the educational polity are relatively focussed. School districts are probably not accurately described as unifunctional, for their areas of concern reach widely into the social lives of their communities and overlap in both obvious and subtle ways with those of other local jurisdictions. Still, school districts are charged primarily with providing free public education to certain age groups, and they are inclined to treat correlative functions in terms of relationships to this main (though broad) definition of purpose.

2. School districts are compelled to offer certain services, both by the fiat of their parent jurisdictions and by the situations in which they find themselves. Thus they may not choose to offer education to some children and deny it to others, and they are required to provide for children during a certain number of hours per day and a certain number of days per year. If their social situation gives them a larger clientele year by year, they must take them in, however much it may disadjust their programs or however much they may wish it otherwise. Some municipal functions are likewise compelled from above or below, but in few cases are the standards of service so exacting. "Police protection," for example, is a flexible criterion of performance, as compared to those imposed on the schools.

3. School policy is also very much restrained by the requirements of the state. Most states have rather elaborate sets of requirements about what school systems may and may not do. These pertain to a wide range of curricular, personnel, financial, and building matters. Many other local services are likewise restricted by the laws of the states.

Granted these limitations, however, school policies do vary, and so does the treatment they receive in local decision-making systems. These questions, in fact, reveal some interesting distinctions among the districts in our sample, as well as some substantial similarities.

The subject-matter of the policy process.--Interaction data on school board meetings make possible a comparison of the sample districts in terms of their relative attention to subject-matters of various kinds. The observation records of the meetings were coded into six subject categories according to the major focus of each segment of discussion. These categories are personnel, curriculum and other instructional matters, school-community relations, facilities, finance, and administration. Examples of the materials classified into each may be found in Appendix E. Thus it was possible to describe meetings, and, through totals for the study period, boards, by the proportions of total interactions and the proportions of time they put into each category. While these data do not distinguish the trivial from the consequential (the problem of giving operational definitions to qualities such as these seeming unsurmountable), they to turn up significant patterns of performance. Tables 13 and 14 summarize the findings by interactions and time respectively.

In the personnel category District B is strikingly low both in interactions and in time spent. District A, it will be noted, is slightly lower than D and C in interactions, and substantially lower than they in time. The data and impressions of observation suggest that the difference between time and interactions in D is accounted for by longer contributions on the part of the superintendent. On curriculum, the higher status districts outstrip the lower ones in interactions, but in the time distribution, District D once again shows the wieght of the superintendent's long contributions. If our measures were more refined, they would probably indicate discussion of curriculum in A and B as distinguished from presentations on curriculum in D. District C's low proportionate attention to curriculum is notable.

Districts A and B show much more attention to school-community relations than C and D, while on facilities C and D are proportionately higher.

TABLE 13

PROPORTION OF TOTAL MEETING INTERACTIONS BY SUBJECT CATEGORY

District	Personnel	Curric.	Sch-Comm	Facilities	Finance	Admin.
A	.17	.18	.25	.12	.10	.18
B	.07	.22	.17	.13	.25	.15
C	.20	.04	.09	.51	.08	.08
D	.17	.14	.04	.22	.15	.27

TABLE 14

PROPORTION OF TOTAL MEETING TIME BY SUBJECT CATEGORY

District	Personnel	Curric.	Sch-Comm	Facilities	Finance	Admin.
A	.17	.19	.27	.12	.08	.18
B	.06	.30	.23	.08	.19	.15
C	.20	.04	.09	.50	.08	.09
D	.21	.21	.04	.21	.10	.22

Part of District C's strikingly high proportion of time and interactions in this category is to be explained by the board's detailed attention to the facilities at the new school, opened near the beginning of the observation period. Only part are thus explained, however, for even if this portion of the facilities discussion were deducted, C would undoubtedly still be high in this column. Furthermore, the fact of this extended attention to the new school building is significant in itself. The contrasts between A-B and C-D on school-community relations and on facilities seems to typify the distinctions between these two pairs of districts. In finance District B goes well above the others in proportionate attention, and District C slightly below. This finding probably reflects accurately the objective situations of the districts, i.e., the fact that District B is the hardest pressed financially and Districts C and A the least. A part of this picture, of course, is the further fact that District B fought a losing referendum campaign for a bond issue and a tax rate increase during the period. On "administration," a residual category utilized for matters having to do with the "administration of the board," i.e., routine board business, District D is significantly high, District C low.

In summary, the District A board, comparatively speaking, seems much oriented toward curriculum and the relations of the system with the community, and rather little interested in facilities and finance. This board's concern with community relations is quite clearly not a function of a high rate of trouble with the public or an excitable demand structure. It seems rather to reflect two things; the board's interpretation of itself as a buffer and communications link for the administration, to whom it tends to leave both technical matters and, practically speaking, policy decisions; and the board's implicit commitment to the notion that the system should take action to avoid community conflict by hedging against it.

The District B system is the most curriculum-oriented in the sample, and like District A it also shows much attention to community relations. The latter emphasis may be explained by the same attributes ascribed in the preceding paragraph to District A, exacerbated in the case of B by a livelier and more threatening structure of community demands.

District C's board gives evidence in these data of the high interest in physical facilities and the low interest in educational program we associated with it in the preceding chapter. Both C and D show low attention to school-community relations. It might be argued that these systems pay little attention to relations with their communities because they are not confronted with a high demand pressure. This position does not seem defensible, however. District A is under no such pressure. Further, both C and D have been high conflict communities in terms of dissent in board elections and referenda, and D has within the last few years gone through two conflict-laden public controversies over the superintendency. Thus the differential attention given to relations with the community seems more a function of board style and role interpretation than of current demand. This hypothetical interpretation supports our predictions about the distribution of subject-matter attention in high conflict, low status districts.

District D on these data once again shows a deviation from the patterns of the rest of the sample. It is the only district that shows sizeable differences in proportion of attention to subject categories between interactions and time allocation. As we suggested above, the explanation probably lies in the domination of meetings by the superintendent and board president; the District D board, it will be recalled, showed the lowest rate of interaction in the sample. The style of the district is less one of give-and-take and more one of extended contribution by a few actors than that of any other of the sample districts.

Policy outputs: the educational programs.--In policy output the school decision-making system finally comes to focus on what it is all about--the education of children. There is considerable difficulty, however, in the question of how to describe the "outputs" of school districts in comparative ways. To do so in terms of "measures passed" over a short period of time seems meaningless, for most of the specific decisions of school policy bodies are routine and trivial. The significant aspects of output would seem to be two: the occasional "big" policy decision, of which there might or might not be one in a given period of six months; and the "tone" of the district, the steady characteristics imparted to the educational system by the cumulative actions, small and big, of the decision-makers. Whether a system has happened to go through some big specific policy change during a short observation period is likely to be a matter of accident. On the other hand, the quality of a system may reflect levels of demands and resources, but it must also reflect the character of decisions made--and perhaps of those not made--over a period of time. Such criteria, however, may in some circumstances reflect only the leftover impetus of actions taken earlier by some decision-makers since disappeared, and not the product of the decision system as it now exists.

Thus the attempt to assay output is at best an ambiguous effort with systems of the kind under study here. Even the effort to "evaluate" schools in a comparative way, a somewhat different problem, raises very difficult questions of standards and measurements. It would take a quite separate set of tools and procedures from those used in this project to carry out an evaluative task in any detail. Certain factual information and interview data, however, may lead to firmer impressions of the educational programs of the sample districts and thus provide a rough indication of the outputs of these political systems.

Basic staff and expenditure characteristics of the study districts are summarized in Table 15. On only a few items do these data show substantial differences among systems. Operating expenditures per child, as we noted before, show District A considerably ahead of the others, with the tax-rich District C second in rank and the tax-poor District B fourth. This is not, of course, a simple measure of ability to pay, but it probably combines elements of ability and effort. In simple student-teacher ratio the only district far from the median of the sample is C; its higher ratio may result from the fact that it is smaller in scale and hence has less need for extra service personnel, and/or from the greater emphasis the board puts on physical facilities. Average class size in this district exceeds that of the others, but not in substantial degree.

Perhaps the most striking feature of these data is the considerably greater teacher turnover in District A as compared with the remaining three. As the figures show, it has held a much lower proportion of staff members five years and a much lower proportion ten years and more. The reasons for this higher turnover do not, to all appearances, lie in any lower reputation on District A's part; its reputation on the contrary seems excellent. Nor does it lie in instability in the district, nor in salary scale, as all these districts are in similarly competitive salary positions. This is not to be taken to imply that long average teacher service is necessarily a positive quality feature. While long service yields experience, high turnover probably means a younger-aged staff and one that is closer to its own college training. Teachers of the latter kind may be more adaptable to new educational methods and concepts. This index by itself probably tells little about the over-all merit of an educational program.

To provide supplementary information about the educational character of the systems, superintendents were questioned in the final interviews

TABLE 15

SOME EDUCATIONAL STAFF AND EXPENDITURE CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE DISTRICTS

	A	B	C	D
Operating expenditure per student, annual	$718	$621	$644	$627
Simple student/teacher ratio	20.5	21.0	25.2	21.6
Average class size	25	26.9	28	24
Average annual staff turnover	25%	12.5%	6%	11%
Per cent of teaching staff in district				
5 years and over	32.6%	49.8%	60.6%	50%
10 years and over	12.2	21.0	30.3	29.2
20 years and over	4.1	3.3	3.0	16.7
Faculty salary range				
With Bachelor's degree	$5,400-8,400	$5,400-11,070	$5,380-8,100	$6,000-8,905
With Master's degree	5,800-10,000	5,540-11,340	5,750-9,600	6,325-10,000

Sources: data in first row provided by Cook County Superintendent of Public Instruction. All other data from local school districts.

about certain special aspects of program. All of the districts have "new-math" programs and have had for several years. In A and B the main impetus for these was said to come originally from the staff, in C and D from the administration. Some of them also have foreign language instruction, though specific patterns vary considerably. District A offers two languages, French and Spanish, and requires that one be taken in the sixth grade but puts them on an elective basis in seventh and eighth. District B offers French as an elective in grades five through eight; in both A and B the initiative for the languages was ascribed to board members. In C French is offered in grades two through eight and was started primarily at the initiative of the administration. District D gives no foreign language instruction. Music programs in the schools show little significant variation. Only one of the districts, C, has a lunch program for all grades. A has no lunch program, B and D limited programs for junior high level students only.

Further descriptive materials were garnered from administration and board responses to questions about strengths and weaknesses of district educational programs. These may perhaps be best summarized district by district, as they yield pictures both of notable program features and of the tendencies of thought about curriculum among district officials.

The District A answers were by far the most extensive, probably because of the character of the program and the orientation of the respondents themselves. From these answers it is clear that the district has built a number of novel features into its educational effort in the past several years. In a program now modified it has hired staff on a year-round basis, with the summers used for enrichment activities for both teachers and students. Primary-level classes are "ungraded," and there is some "team teaching" done in the upper grades. The district sponsors a summer internship program for college students of education. Much emphasis was put by respondents on the attention given in the schools to individual student problems and talents. In the junior high school grades, a 45-minute period is set aside each day for a "special needs and interests" program, in which a variety of remedial and enrichment opportunities are made available to students, usually on an elective basis. In the responses from board members, individual attention was mentioned by four as a particular strength of the program, quality faculty and the all-year program by three. Social studies, teacher turnover, and English instruction were the most often-mentioned points of weakness. When these respondents were asked "What problems are now under discussion in the district?" a large number of curriculum and personnel-related items were cited, including foreign language instruction, sex education, and teacher recruitment the most frequently.

Responses in District B also emphasized individual attention to student needs and the excellence of the teaching staff. Other than these, no particular features of program were mentioned except a project under development and as yet not specifically formulated to enhance creative opportunities for students. Three respondents mentioned foreign language instruction and one reading as points of weakness. The reading program, a principal point of criticism by the very vocal "fundamental education" group in the district, was cited by six respondents as a problem currently under discussion, and foreign language instruction by three.

The new school was the main object of satisfaction on the part of District C respondents, a number of whom took particular pride in the instructional equipment housed in this attractive building. Other items mentioned in this district with approbation were the music program, especially the prize-winning upper-grades band, language instruction, and the home economics and shop programs. Only one item was named as a weakness by respondents that was not assumed to be corrected by the opening of the new building; that item was the French program, which was said not to enroll enough students. Not one instructional-curricular matter was mentioned as being currently under discussion by the board and superintendent.

In District D the library program was the principal point of strength stressed by those interviewed. This program is one which has elicited much cooperation from parents in the community, to whom it seems to be a matter of pride. Respondents in this district also made reference to modern math, science, art, and home economics and shop as fields in which the district had gained strength. The addition of a staff psychologist was also cited as a positive feature of the program. Inadequate library space and discipline were called weaknesses, and one respondent also mentioned combined classes as a problem under discussion.

The assessment of educational programs in these school districts must begin with the impression that all of them seem good as compared to the broad range of American elementary systems. All invest substantially in operating expenditures, all pay good salaries as teachers' salaries go, all maintain small class sizes, single shift schedules, and at least some special services. All offer, at least in degree, some of the "advanced" and specialized instruction that is identified by much of the American public with modern elementary education. The spread of variation in program with which we are dealing is not wide, a fact attributable to the districts' common location in the suburbs and to their relatively high taxable wealth.

District A's program is without doubt the exceptional one in the group. It is widely known for innovation, and its retired superintendent has attained national recognition as a leader in the elementary education field. Board members in A, and members of the community, show pride in the district's accomplishment leavened by a continued willingness to experiment. Interview data suggest clearly that they expect continued educational leadership from their superintendent and staff. The orientation of the board is very much toward educational questions, and its attitude seems to be that it will follow if led by the administration and prod if not led.

District B's pattern is not dissimilar; it has not been so innovational, but it has pushed even further in a few program sectors. The district is more limited in resources, and this factor has probably cramped its program in some degree, though it has sustained a high level of program effort. The board is curriculum-oriented and the staff has apparently provided strong educational leadership. In this sphere, as in so many others, the thrust of leadership now seems somewhat blunted by conflict within the system and threats from outside. The experimental attitude appears to be more tentative here than in A, the tone of policy less vigorous.

In District C the condition of the system has doubtless benefitted in some ways from the material orientation of the board, and from the lack of attentive interest from the board in instructional matters. The former benefit is instrumental, not direct, however, and the latter is a rather passive advantage. The program probably suffers from lack of a supportive context and from the uncertainties that occasional harassment generates. In the circumstance, it would appear that the impetus that comes from within the staff, from professional stimuli, and from community demands not articulated and mediated by the board are not sufficient to give the system a vigorous program. It would not be fair to say that the program languishes, but neither does it have elements of distinction.

District D's situation is also one of essential passivity on the part of the board. Although much less harassed, the administration still seems somewhat tentative about program. The board is supportive, but not actively so. It does very little to frame goals or demands, and it, too, therefore falls short of providing the stimulative policy context that pushes the district to unusual performance.

These educational programs reflect the "outputs" of the decision-making process, particularly insofar as they show variation from district to district. Our sample is neither so large nor our measurements so acute that we can say with great confidence what feature of the process gives rise to what specific feature of policy. To some degree, variations in program reflect variations in ability to pay, or, in this well-heeled sample, willingness to pay. They also doubtless reflect the demand structure of the community in a variety of ways. It is interesting, for example, that while some respondents in District A actually cited preparation for college as one of the goals of the schools (elementary schools, it should be recalled), several respondents in both C and D mentioned special pride in their shop and home economics programs. These differences reflect interpretations (probably accurate in a gross way) of what the school officials think their constituencies want.

Variations in program are also probably related to variations in decision style and division of labor. Systems that are more curriculum-oriented and more community relations-oriented are systems that show somewhat greater program development. The others are more occupied with plant and with discussion of rules and regulations and more routine matters. To some extent this distribution of attention probably has roots in the superintendent's estimate of what he can do with the organizational material with which he must work. Those in Districts C and D, where detail is most likely to get board response, seem somewhat reluctant to try to stimulate much discussion of program, probably because of the risks involved. The differences among districts are also probably related to the forward thrust provided by the board. Even a superintendent in a District A might draw back on educational program if the board were not behind him both supporting and prodding. Thus we conclude that program is the outgrowth both of community demand and of a balance of organizational forces. While the superintendent is recognizedly educational leader, his leadership is not independent of his relationship to and the character of the board. It should be mentioned, too, that the collective and individual qualities of the teaching staff probably have an effect on program policy, as they certainly do on program execution. The fact that we have not emphasized the teachers' role reflects the limits put on the study and not disregard for the place of these key people in the educational process.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters we have summarized in some detail the characteristics of decision-making in four sample school districts. On a great many counts these are found to vary rather widely. The basic hypothesis of the study, stated in Chapter I, was that such variations are systematically related to the characteristics of community context, and especially to certain status-related community expectations that are reflected in the style and division of work of the authority system. At a very general level these expectations are supported by the findings, but with qualifications that merit examination and interpretation.

The limitations on our ability to draw conclusions are obvious, and they were inherent in the study design at the outset. They arise in the first instance from the size of the sample, which prohibits generalization and makes the control of many variables virtually impossible. They also spring from the fact that the sample districts were selected off a continuum of aggregate behavioral characteristics and could not therefore be either perfectly matched nor perfectly differentiated. This latter is a limit that inexorably imposes itself in one way or another on efforts to compare complex real-life systems in a fairly thorough fashion. Despite these built-in problems, there remains much to say about apparent relationships among variables and the implications of these for school system government and for other aspects of community political life.

All things considered, District A presents an almost "perfect" typical picture of the low-conflict system at work. In almost every aspect it fulfills the expectations of such systems set out at the beginning of the project. Its demand structure is both vital and orderly; the thoroughly organized caucus system provides assurance that school office will not be filled in a haphazard way, and a set of organized groups attend to the less formal side of demand presentation and system-monitoring functions. The district has a fairly effective set of regularized contacts with other units of government and institutions of community life. The board itself is apparently attuned to and representative of the constituency, at least in some gross sense, and it has provided the community with superintendents that fit the political picture well. While the system does not lack the means to make demands felt, these means are highly structured; the structures themselves, the fact that they exist, and the ethos of the sub-culture act in combination as a powerful conflict-suppressant. Thus the system seems both open and controlled.

At the level of the authority structure this last description also applies. The board works openly, quickly, and informally, its atmosphere unconstrained and congenial, its major attention going to curriculum and community relations questions. The superintendent has much administrative latitude and policy initiative, and the subtle relationship of administrator and board competencies and responsibilities seems well-understood on both sides. The role of the board in this district might almost be said to be more consultative than decision-making, and in respect to the community it tends to perform as a shock and responsibility absorber. Staff assistance is ample and well-used. The educational program of the district is stable and highly innovational, perhaps partly in spite of and partly because of a high rate of teacher turnover and what appears to be an intense level of achievement aspiration in the community.

The situation of District A is in many ways one of luxury, for the system has an abundance of relevant resources available to it. District B's condition is that of a system basically similar in some respects but under a set of pressures not present in A. B is, in the first place, somewhat lower on the status ladder, i.e., its population contains a somewhat lesser proportion of certain occupational, educational, and income attributes. It is also larger in size, though we have no reason to believe that size in itself is a relevant variable. In some ways B may also be more heterogeneous, though in some ways it is not; the power of heterogeneity as an explanatory variable depends on the particular definition given it. The pressures that tend to make District B behave differently from District A, however, seem to be two: relative scarcity of resources, and ideological dissent.

Like District A, B has a structured set of demand vehicles, but these have shown a rising level of dissensus in very recent years. The institutions of demand presentation, indeed, have served to focus and clarify dissent, creating the pseudo-party situation mentioned earlier. The scarcity of resources has made the system more vulnerable to threats (in part simply by multiplying the occasions for dissent) and the existence of ideology-based demands has focussed dissent and given it some organizational cohesion and thrust. It has probably been this combination of characteristics that has introduced instability into the decision-making system.

The response of the authority system can be described at two levels. On the one hand, conflict both from outside and within the system has grown more explicit, with more ruffled relationships and less tidiness about decision-making. On the other hand, certain tactical compensations in the decision-making system are evident, introduced consciously or unconsciously to keep the system operating as much as possible in a low-conflict mode. Thus meetings are longer, procedural formalities tend to be preserved, committees are used actively if with some misgivings, audience presentations are invited at board meetings, and some decisional work is screened from public view. These characteristics at least in some degree manifest the use of organizational skills on the part of the board and administration.

For all the tension present in this system, however, it still demonstrates many basic similarities to District A. The board tends to focus its attention on curriculum and community relations problems and to show more interest in broad policy problems than in administrative detail. Under the cover of surface conflict the administration preserves much latitude of action and exercises much fundamental policy initiative. The basic division of responsibility and the needs and strengths of technical expertise appear to be a matter of agreement among nearly all those in authority. The board has not, however protected and reinforced the administration against community criticism. Some of its collective defenses have crumbled in the face of community pressure.

District B perhaps typifies the low-conflict system undergoing change. Its established procedures of demand aggregation and presentation focus and even magnify dissent; in this sense it is a lively and responsive system. Within the authority system it has developed some "corrective" techniques, but these hold the structure together only tentatively and at a price. How long such a situation can be sustained is problematic.

District C is in many ways an extreme representation of a high-conflict system in operation. At the electoral level its dissent is haphazard and unstructured. There appear to be no particular reasons for or cohesion to conflict in the community; the system itself has ample financial resources and our research detected no overt or covert ideological pressures. Few groups or individuals present demands to the board, which on the whole operates almost in a vacuum as far as external forces are concerned.

Yet internally the system operates in a tense, hostile, and unstructured way. Board meetings are long and chaotic and marked with evidence of mutual suspicion. The board spends most of its effort on detail, paying little attention to educational problems and policies and showing much concern with facilities. The superintendent's scope of freedom is limited, there is little evident respect for his expertise, and he is often cast in the role of shop steward rather than operating executive. The "tone" of organizational relationships and the decision-making procedures are radically different from those of District A. What the system seems to lack at all levels is structure, settled, easy understandings about relationships, and the application of organizational skills.

Of all the districts in the sample, D is easily the most deviant from prior expectations. Given its record of electoral dissent and its status level, a simple prediction from our basic hypothesis would have pictured it in much the same fashion as District C. In terms of electoral conflict and group activity it does not appear much different from C, and its per-pupil tax base is much lower, a factor that might be expected to induce conflict. Yet its decision-making system bears little resemblance to C's, and superficially it has some of the same characteristics as A's. The board is quiet and generally acquiescent to the leadership of the president and superintendent. The atmosphere in which it works is friendly and relationships are usually smooth.

On some dimensions, however, District D performs in a manner of its own, quite distinct from A and somewhat similar to C. Its interaction rate is slow, and it lacks the easy give-and-take of A. Interactions are heavily weighted toward president and superintendent, with the balance of the board quiet and rather uninquisitive. The board's attention goes proportionately less to community relations than A and B's, and proportionately more to personnel and facilities. In this respect it is more like C, though less facility-oriented. Of all the districts, D spends the most interactions on "administration," a category that includes chiefly formalistic and trivial matters.

In summary, the position of the District D superintendent is an unusual combination of elements. His freedom to administer and supply policy leadership are great, the board tending to be compliant, particularly on broader issues and educational matters. In effect the board tends neither to control him very closely nor to prod him to action. There are, however, some evidences of dissatisfaction on both sides, a sense that perhaps the board is not playing the full role it should. Both the board and superintendent convey the wish that the board played a larger part in the system's work, and the board sometimes displays a tendency to "peck away" at him on small matters. In both focus and style the system does not enjoy the settled, understood relationships of the low-conflict situation.

The question remains, of course, why District D shows these ambiguous characteristics. A number of explanations occur, all of which probably reflect some portion of the truth. In part the situation doubtless arises out of the personality qualities of the participants, particularly of the superintendent, who has handled a difficult assignment with skill and with a style of his own. More will be said below of the role of this variable. In some part, too, the total character of this system is probably the product of the change through which the community is and has been going. Like District B, District D may be a mutant of its type because of the impact of certain change processes.

Examination of the data suggests yet a third possible explanation of the behavior of District D, one that fits both the approach principally utilized throughout our analysis and some of the indications to be found in the literature. It may be that the peculiar decision-making picture in District D manifests the characteristics to be expected in the more urbanized place. It will be noted in Table 2 that community D ranks considerably higher on a composite index of urbanism than the other test districts; in fact, it lies near the top of the entire distribution of the original 48 suburban districts. On some individual variables related to urbanism, this community is also quite different from the others in the smaller sample, notably on owner-occupied dwelling units, single-family structures, dwelling units built since 1950, and women in the labor force. Only on fertility does it fail to occupy an extreme position, falling somewhat above A and somewhat below B and C. The link between urbanism and system behavior may be through the greater disattachment or disinvolvement of the more urban man. While there is no reason to expect the urban dweller to be less interested in the fate of his children, he might be expected to have fewer ties into community life and into the structure of community activity. He is less likely to be a home-owner and direct payer of property taxes. Given the nature of his dwelling unit he is less likely to "neighbor"; the fact that the women of the community are more likely to work cuts the level of their interactions in the local area.

The result may be a lessening of attention to and pressure on the local system of decision-making, especially with reference to school business. To put the matter in another way, the local demand structure may relax in the urbanized area as people's chances for social contact decline. What we are proposing is that this is the situation we find reflected in District D, where little in the way of demand behavior is detected and where the board therefore seems to operate in a vacuum. At the same time, the system retains, if in a rather quiet way, some of the distrust of expertise expected in a lower status place, and it lacks the organizational and communications skills that might give it an atmosphere of confidence and informality. These links between level of urbanism and decision-making style are thin, to be sure, but they suggest some intriguing problems for research in local government.

There are, as we noted early in this chapter, a number of other factors that may account for the variations we find among these systems, factors that we cannot, given our sample size or the data at hand, adequately evaluate. One of the most obvious of these is personality, i.e., the personal qualities and styles of the principal actors in the various systems. There can be no doubt that this must have some influence on the way the systems react. Still, on the basis of impression, we would propose that personality can for the most part be regarded as a system feature, as a part of the whole that does not usually introduce disconsonant behaviors and attitudes. Board members are selected out of a common social context (elections are at-large, it should be recalled) and superintendents recruited "to type." This is not to discount the personality variable but to suggest that it is an intervening force that may set limits to a system but probably does not usually determine its over-all character. To illustrate the point, it seems unlikely that if Districts A and C were to switch superintendents (a most improbable event), A's system would come to look like C and vice versa. Likewise, it is doubtful that Superintendent D, for all the skill he has demonstrated in his present district, would change the basic character of system B by his presence there. Some elements in the situation would surely alter, but its tensions and ambiguities would linger on, at least until substantial policy outputs and institutional innovations were felt by the system.

Out of this account of the characteristics of decision-making in four school districts, a variety of propositions may be drawn. The following perhaps convey the central thrust of our analysis:

1. The form of the school decision-making system is heavily conditioned by the social context in which it is set. Context-related variations in style, atmosphere, content, and division of work in the decision-making process are notable even among districts within a common framework of legal limitations and shared culture.

2. A principal factor that differentiates systems appears to be the degree to which organizational skills are applied to the political process at both the demand-aggregating and decision-making levels.

3. The application of these skills reflects (a) their availability in the community context, and (b) community expectations as to the means and ends of doing public business.

4. In general terms, the application of organizational skills is manifest through the regularization or "structuring" of the political process.

5. Low-conflict systems appear to have more "orderly," more managed, and more issue-related modes of demand aggregation and presentation.

6. Low-conflict systems grant wider decision latitude to technical-administrative personnel.

7. The boards in low-conflict systems are more oriented toward

school-community relations and curriculum problems, in high-conflict systems toward physical facilities.

8. The low-conflict decision-making system under pressure tends to move toward the use of more overt conflict-management devices.

9. A higher level of urbanism in the community may result in a low level of demand behavior and hence in passivity in the governing body.

What has been said in these pages may convey a sense of inevitability about the processes of school government and the relationships and consequences they involve, but such is not our intention. There is nothing here to suggest that the introduction of different factors into a system cannot change its character in important ways. Indeed, our account of these four systems illustrates variety in itself, and it cannot touch the potential effect of circumstances not present in this particular sample.

It has not been our purpose to evaluate systems of government, nor to propose prescriptions to correct one condition or another. However, it seems appropriate to suggest ways in which changes in the basic relationships in some school governments might come about. It is commonplace to suppose that American society will continue to experience rather rapid rise in general levels of education, of income, and, by some standards, of urbanism. This rise will presumably be accompanied by redistribution of greater proportions of the working population into specialized and technical occupational careers. In other words, the community of the future may expect to have more of the "status" attributes of the Community A of today. If this is the case, and if the local community retains the power it now has in educational policy, the key figure in school decision-making will increasingly be the professional educational administrator. Such a prospect raises vital questions about the preparation of administrators and about the prospects for local democratic control.

The effects of such a social change could not, of course, be expected to be either immediate or even. Given metropolitan residential patterns, there are some places where they could not be expected to take hold except in the very long run. During this transitional period, participants in school processes, both administrators and board members, might be encouraged to develop organizational skills. These are now widely recognized in the training of educational administrators, but they are accorded little conscious attention in the recruitment and socialization of board members. Some of the potentials for planned change along this line are obvious.

It is not so clear, however, that the consequences of such a development would be universally acclaimed. If our analysis is correct, the raising of the level of participant skills would shift the distribution of work in the system toward a more generalized and permissive role for the board, leaving the administration with a greater share both of policy initiative and of operating control. Thus it seems doubtful that movement in this direction would satisfy the urge for more effective community control of educational decision-making wherever or for whatever reasons that urge may exist. This is in essence another way of raising the question of the relationship between community demands and technical-bureaucratic power. The "structured" situation of the low-conflict community, with the board playing an advisory role founded on its position in the communication channels between technician and constituency, may be the most likely pattern for the future. If this is so, the burden of responsiveness and responsibility will fall most heavily upon those who occupy administrative positions.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR, SOCIAL STRUCTURE, AND DECISION-MAKING IN FORTY-EIGHT ILLINOIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Data for this study were drawn from 48 elementary school districts in Cook County.[1] The legal and institutional characteristics of these districts are virtually identical with those of the districts described in the body of the present report. The period covered by the study was 1958-62 inclusive, during which time each district held five board elections and from zero to nine bond and tax-rate referenda. Indexes of "participation" and "dissent" for elections and referenda were calculated for each voting occasion and for each district. Participation indexes are total votes cast as proportions of total potential votes in the district. Dissent indexes for board elections are votes for losers as proportions of total votes cast, and for referenda "no" votes as proportions of total votes cast. Results showed wide variation among districts on all measures, and analysis of voting data alone showed the following relationships: (1) a high positive relationship between participation and dissent; (2) a high positive relationship, district by district, between measures of aggregate behavior on elections and corresponding measures on referenda; (3) higher participation and dissent on tax rate than on bond referenda; (4) no time-trend over the five-year study period.

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[1] This is a very brief resume of a great deal of material. A more extensive discussion is David W. Minar, "The Community Basis of Conflict in School System Politics," American Sociological Review, (forthcoming, December, 1966).

These data were also run against a variety of aggregate community social characteristics and against fiscal and institutional characteristics of the school systems. The latter were derived from the tract reports of the 1960 Census of Population and Housing,[2] from reports of the Cook County Superintendent of Schools, and from interviews with local district superintendents. We will describe only the most pertinent variables here.

Social rank: as discussed and computed in Eshref Shevky and Wendell Bell, Social Area Analysis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955). It is the average of the scores of two components: occupation ("craftsmen...," "operatives...," and "laborers" per 1,000 employed persons), and education (persons who have completed no more than eighth grade per 1,000 persons 25 and older). Both component scores are subtracted from 1,000 and standardized to the range of Los Angeles, 1940.

College education: number of persons over 25 reporting some college, as a proportion of number of persons 25 and older.

Income over $10,000: number of family units reporting incomes over $10,000, as a proportion of total family units.

Professional-managerial occupations: number of persons in professional-managerial occupations, as a proportion of total employed.

Urbanism: as discussed and computed by Shevky and Bell, op. cit. Its three components are fertility (children 5 and under per 1,000 females 15 through 44); women in the labor force (females 14 and older); single-family dwelling units (single-family detached dwelling units per 1,000 dwelling units.) Scores are standardized to the range of Los Angeles, 1940, and averaged.

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[2] United States Bureau of Census, Census Tracts: Chicago, Illinois, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area. 1960, Final Report PHC 1-(20), (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1962).

Fertility: unstandardized fertility ratio as described in the preceding paragraph.

Immobility: proportion of persons 5 and older living in the same house in 1960 as in 1955.

Age of structure: proportion of dwelling units built before 1950.

Owner-occupied dwelling units: proportion of dwelling units occupied by owner.

The results of rank-order correlations run on these indexes are reported in Table 17. These show that status variables (social rank, income, education, occupation) relate inversely to election participation and dissent and to referendum dissent but not significantly to referendum participation. Life-style and housing variables, except fertility, show only scattered relationships to electoral behavior.

Analysis of further data indicates that districts of high rank and low dissent are the ones most likely to use caucuses for school board nominations, and that boards in general tend to reflect the relative standings of their communities on socio-economic characteristics. Comments of superintendents suggested that boards in high conflict communities tend to be harder to work with and to deal more with detailed matters and less with broad policy questions.

We will make no effort here to interpret these findings, except to say that they seem to reveal linkages among community characteristics, community political behavior toward schools, and decision-making styles. These can perhaps be explained as related to the relative abundance in communities of skills in conflict-management and communication. It was on this hypothesis that the larger study reported in this volume was based.

TABLE 16

RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS AMONG SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND ELECTION AND REFERENDUM VARIABLES

	EP	ED	RP	RD	SR	ED	Prof-Mgrial Occup.	Income over $10,000	URB.	FERT.	Immobility	Age Struct.	OODU
Election participation	1.00	+.53	+.42	+.59	-.42	-.48	-.49	-.49	-.24	+.30	+.01	+.13	+.25
Election dissent		1.00	-.09	+.35	-.67	-.66	-.66	-.67	-.22	+.39	-.16	+.19	-.01
Referendum participation			1.00	+.61	+.16	+.13	+.15	+.09	-.16	+.01	.00	+.16	+.33
Referendum dissent				1.00	-.26	-.30	-.31	-.40	-.27	+.36	-.11	+.19	+.13
Social rank					1.00	+.94	+.94	+.87	+.04	-.25	-.05	+.05	+.14
College education						1.00	+.98	+.92	+.05	-.32	-.03	-.03	+.05
Prof-managerial occupation							1.00	+.92	+.02	-.33	-.02	.00	+.08
Income over $10,000								1.00	+.22	-.54	+.18	-.13	+.11
Urbanism									1.00	-.82	+.71	-.78	-.50
Fertility										1.00	-.80	+.74	+.22
Immobility											1.00	-.77	-.21
Age of structure												1.00	+.55
Owner-occupied dwelling													1.00

Levels of significance: values of r_s greater than ±.33 are significant at the .01 level; values of r_s greater than ±.24 are significant at the .05 level.

APPENDIX B

INTERACTION INSTRUMENTS AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The interaction instruments were designed to provide data on meeting participants, meeting content, elapsed time, seating arrangements, personal information regarding participants, and other relevant data. Six subject-matter categories were derived from an article by Thomas H. Eliot.[1] These categories were slightly modified because legal-structural variables were controlled in the sample. The categories included personnel, curriculum, public relations, facilities, finance, and administration.

The work of Robert F. Bales[2] with small group interaction research was very helpful in setting up categories which reflected the character of individual participation. Markus and Johansen,[3] two graduate students in educational administration at Northwestern, had modified Bales' twelve interaction categories into four broader categories which allowed greater ease of subjective coding in a fast moving meeting. The four categories of participant action were "positive reaction," "contributes," "inquires," and "negative reaction."

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[1] Eliot, "Toward an Understanding...," op. cit.

[2] Bales, Interaction Process Analysis, op. cit.; "A Set of Categories...," op. cit.; "Channels of Communication...," op. cit.

[3] Franklin Markus and John Johansen, "A Study of the Decision-Making and Leadership Processes of Selected School Boards," (ditto; School of Education, Northwestern University, cs. 1962). See also David W. Minar and R. J. Snow, "An Experiment with an Instrument for Measuring Interactions in School Board Meetings," (ditto; Center for Metropolitan Studies, Northwestern University, 1965).

In each meeting the observer used Interaction Form 1 as a work sheet on which to record the basic meeting data. (The three Interaction Forms discussed here will be found at the end of this appendix.) The seating arrangement was sketched in the square provided, and each participant was given a number. Each time a participant took verbal action which fit within one of the categories of participation listed above (code letters are provided on Interaction Form 1) the action was recorded. For example, if Superintendent A was participant number 1 in a school board meeting in District A, and if he answered a question put to him by the board president with a fact or a statement contributory toward the on-going discussion, the observer recorded "1B" on Interaction Form 1, indicating that participant number 1 had made a contribution.

Time data were recorded in the left-hand column of Form 1. Each time the meeting discussion shifted to a new subject the time was entered, and a description of the business was recorded for subsequent coding purposes.

Form 1 provides space for indication of any miscellaneous materials obtained by the observer in each meeting, as well as space for notes as to meeting attendance, unusual phenomena, persons present and participating, etc. Meeting work sheets used to record interactions after space was filled on Form 1 were simply blank pages with a column ruled down the left-hand side for time notations.

Analysis began with a substantive coding of the meeting issues. Using the categories numbered in Roman numerals from I through VI, each issue discussed in the meeting was classified and given a Roman numeral code number.

Interaction Form 2 was utilized in step two of the analysis. It served as an interaction matrix, with meeting participants in rows and response types in columns. A separate Form 2 sheet was used for each of the substantive issue areas in each meeting. Thus, all the interactions dealing with "personnel," and with each of the other issues, were taken from Form 1 and supplementary work sheets and enumerated on a Form 2. Superintendent A's contribution mentioned above would be recorded in the matrix at the square intersecting both participant number 1 and "contributions" on the Form 2 sheet for the issue on which the contribution was made.

When the interactions had all been recorded and summed within each issue content category, it became possible to determine by inspection those participants who had contributed most, those who had asked the most questions, and those who had reacted positively and negatively throughout the meeting.

The final step of data manipulation utilized Interaction Form 3. This step was a summary of the total data from the meeting. All the matrices from all the issue areas were added together to produce a total matrix of participation in each category of participation by individual participant. These figures were summed by participant (across) and by character of participation (down), and percentages were calculated. Form 3 called for the calculation of the proportion of the total interactions accounted for by each participant, the proportion that fell into each participation category, the proportion of total meeting interactions occurring in each of the issue areas, and the proportion of total meeting time allocated to discussion in each of the different issue areas.

Interaction analysis results from six meetings of each school board were summed together to increase data reliability. Total summaries were calculated, thus allowing conclusions to be drawn about differences in meeting styles, differences in patterns of individual participation, differences in time allocations, and differences in the character of participation by individuals.

DOC. #________

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

Meeting______________ Date______ Time________

Observer____________________ Place____________________

Obtained and attached

( ) Agenda
( ) Local News Media
( ) Misc. Suppl. Material
( ) Report of Oral Commun.
from
( ) Other

Called to order______by____

Seating Arrangement

A. Pos. Reaction
B. Contributes
C. Inquires
D. Neg. Reaction

Coding
I. Personnel
II. Curriculum
III. School-Commun. Rel.
IV. Facilities
V. Finance

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13

Notes - Preliminary

Code & Time

INTERACTION FORM 1

Code Category (ies)____________

Meeting____________Date________Elapsed Time________Total Time________Page #__

ITEM:

Participant	A) + Reactions	B) Contributions	C) Inquiries	D) - Reactions	Total
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
Totals					

INTERACTION FORM 2

MEETING OBSERVATION SUMMARY

Meeting Code:________________ Date:___________ Observer:_______________________

Total time:_______minutes Total interactions:________Interactions/min.:______

PARTICIPANTS:		INTERACTIONS BY P	
No.	Name	No.	% of total
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
Total			

INTERACTIONS BY KIND

	No.	% of total
A		
B		
C		
D		
Total		

INTERACTIONS BY SUBJECT MATTER

	No.	% of total
I		
II		
III		
IV		
V		
VI		
Total		

TIME BY SUBJECT MATTER

	Minutes	% of total
I		
II		
III		
IV		
V		
VI		
Total		

INTERACTION FORM 3

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Interview appointments were made with superintendents by telephone following their receipt of a general, personal letter introducing the study and inviting their participation. Following the superintendent's interview in each district, the board president was interviewed. The remaining members of the school board and the community influentials were interviewed last.

As soon as possible after each interview (rarely more than an hour or two) notes were examined and the verbatim response to each item was read into a dictaphone for subsequent transcription and analysis. The interview schedules follow.

Schedule A (Administrators)

EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING STUDY #________
CENTER FOR METROPOLITAN STUDIES
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

RESPONDENT:

POSITION (SUP'T., BOARD, COMMUNITY):

ADDRESS: PHONE:

DATE:

INTERVIEWER:

TIME OF INTERVIEW:

We are making a study of the way decisions are made in school districts in this area. The study is sponsored by the Center for Metropolitan Studies at Northwestern University and conducted under a contract with the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education. Your answers to all questions will be kept strictly confidential, and the results of the study will not be publicly identified with you or the district.

II. First, I'd like to ask you some questions about your general feelings about this school district and the community it serves.

1. What is your opinion of the over-all quality of the schools in this district compared to others in the suburbs around here? What two or three things about your program are you especially proud of?

2. Are there any particular weaknesses in the program, anything you are especially concerned about?

3. What problems have been particularly under discussion in the district in the past year or so?

4. How does the district go about making its long-run plans?

   4a. In respect to planning, does the school district have any contacts (meetings, informal conversations, etc.) with other governmental bodies like villages and park districts?

5. Thinking about the community as a whole rather than the school system, what major changes have come about in the period you have been here?

6. What major changes have come to the school system itself in the past few years?

7. Have there been any particular crises, events, or issues in the past few years that have had major effects on the way things are done in the school system?

8. Again thinking of the community as a whole, what sorts of changes do you think are likely in the next ten years or so?

9. Do you anticipate any particular problems for the school system in the next ten years or so?

III. Now I'd like to get some information about how decisions are made in the district.

10. Who is responsible for preparing the board's agenda?

11. What people on the board are you likely to communicate with between board meetings?

12. What kinds of things are you most likely to talk to them about?

13. What people within the administration do you often turn to for policy advice?

14. We'd like to find out how you allot your time in a typical work day. We have five categories that appear to us to cover the biggest share of the work of school administrators. They are listed on this card. Could you tell me approximately what proportion of your time is spent on each?

______________________________Personnel

______________________________Curriculum

______________________________School-community relations

______________________________Facilities

______________________________Finance

______________________________Other

15. Are there any particular groups in the community that are especially interested in educational policy or planning?

IV. Division of Labor

Now I would like to find out how certain specific kinds of business are handled in the district. Here is a list of items I'd like to have you answer. Just put an X in front of the number under each one that corresponds to the most common practice here in this district. Mark only one answer for each.

V. Community actives

In every community some individuals have more influence in community affairs than others. And we'd like to find out who are the most important leaders in education here. We'd like you to think of influential people in the community in general, but not those in the school administration or presently on the board. Could you name some persons whom you feel to be influential in this community? This information will be kept strictly confidential.

RANK	NAME	IDENTIFICATION
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
	6.	
	7.	
	8.	
	9.	
	10.	

Among those you have named, how would you rank them in terms of their influence?

VI. Personal information

16. How many years have you worked in this school district?
17. How many years have you held your present position?
18. What position did you hold immediately before you took this one?
19. Where was that?
20. What college degrees do you hold?
21. From what schools?
22. Do you reside in this district?
23. (If no) Where do you live?

Schedule B (Board Members)

EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING STUDY #____ ____
CENTER FOR METROPOLITAN STUDIES
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

RESPONDENT:

POSITION (SUP'T., BOARD, COMMUNITY):

ADDRESS: **PHONE:**

DATE:

INTERVIEWER:

TIME OF INTERVIEW:

We are making a study of the way decisions are made in school districts in this area. The study is sponsored by the Center for Metropolitan Studies at Northwestern University and conducted under a contract with the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education. Your answers to all questions will be kept strictly confidential, and the results of the study will not by publicly identified with you or the district.

II. First, I'd like to ask you some questions about your general feelings concerning this school district and the community it serves.

1. What is your opinion of the over-all quality of the schools in this district compared to others in the suburbs around here? What two or three things about your program are you especially proud of?

2. Are there any particular weaknesses in the program, anything you are especially concerned about?

3. What problems have been particularly under discussion in the district in the past year or so?

4. How much attention does the board give to long-run plans?

   4a. In respect to planning, does the school district have any contacts (meetings, informal conversations, etc.) with other governmental bodies like villages and park districts?

5. Thinking about the community as a whole rather than the school system, what major changes have come about in the period you have been here?

6. What major changes have come to the school system itself in the past few years?

7. Have there been any particular crises, events, or issues in the past few years that have had major effects on the way things are done in the school system?

8. Again thinking of the community as a whole, what sorts of changes do you think are likely in the next ten years or so?

9. Do you anticipate any particular problems for the school system in the next ten years or so?

III. Now there are some questions I'd like to ask you about your position as board member.

10. About how much time would you say you spend on matters related to your position on the school board?

11. How often do you communicate with the superintendent between board meetings?

12. What kinds of things are you most likely to talk with him about?

13. Are these communications on his initiative or on yours or both?

14. About how often do you communicate with your fellow board members between meetings?

15. Is anybody in particular likely to initiate these conversations?

16. What kind of things are you most likely to talk with other board members about?

17. Do you often have conversations outside board meetings with people in the administration other than the superintendent?

18. How do you feel in general about the board's relations with the superintendent?

IV. Division of labor

Now I would like to find out how certain specific kinds of business are handled in the district. Here is a list of items I'd like to have you answer. Just put an X in front of the number under each one that corresponds to the most common practice here in this district. Mark only one answer for each.

V. Community actives

In every community some individuals have more influence in community affairs than others and we'd like to find out who are the most important leaders here. We'd like you to think of influential people in the community in general, but not those in the school administration or presently on the board. Could you name some persons whom you feel to be influential in this community? This information will be kept strictly confidential.

RANK	NAME	IDENTIFICATION
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
	6.	
	7.	
	8.	
	9.	
	10.	

Among those you have named, how would you rank them in terms of their influence?

Of the names you have listed, whom do you consider to have the greatest influence in determining what happens in educational affairs?

Schedule C (Community)

EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING STUDY #________
CENTER FOR METROPOLITAN STUDIES
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

U. S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

RESPONDENT:

POSITION (SUP'T., BOARD, COMMUNITY):

ADDRESS: **PHONE:**

DATE:

INTERVIEWER:

TIME OF INTERVIEW:

We are making a study of the way decisions are made in school districts in this area. The study is sponsored by the Center for Metropolitan Studies at Northwestern University and conducted under a contract with the Cooperative Research Branch of the United States Office of Education. Your answers to all questions will be kept strictly confidential, and the results of the study will not be publicly identified with you or the district.

II. First, I'd like to ask you some questions about your general feelings concerning this school district and the community it serves.

1. What is your opinion of the over-all quality of the schools in this district compared to others in the suburbs around here? What two or three things about your program are you especially proud of?
2. Are there any particular weaknesses in the program, anything you are especially concerned about?
3. What problems have been particularly under discussion in the district in the past year or so?
4. Thinking about the community as a whole rather than the school system, what major changes have come about in the period you have been here?
5. What major changes have come to the school system itself in the past few years?
6. Have there been any particular crises, events, or issues in the past few years that have had major effects on the way things are done in the school system?
7. Again thinking of the community as a whole, what sorts of changes do you think are likely in the next ten years or so?
8. Do you anticipate any particular problems for the school system in the next ten years or so?

III. Now I'd like to get some information about how things work in the district and how the public participates in school affairs.

9. If you want information about a school policy or problem whom would you contact to get it?
10. If you wanted to make a suggestion about a change in school policy, whom would you make it to?
11. Are there any particular groups in this community that are especially interested in educational policy and problems? (Probe)
12. Can you think of any circumstances that might bring about some major shift in the way the system is run or in school policy?
13. Can you describe some of the ways you have participated in school affairs here? What have your own personal contributions been?

14. Do you think the people in this community generally are very interested in school affairs, fairly interested, or not much interested at all?

15. Has the community defeated any bonds or tax increases proposed by the school board in a referendum in the past five years or so?

    (If yes) What was the issue?

    (If yes) Why do you think it was defeated?

16. About what is the school tax rate in the district now?

17. Outside P.T.A. and school board meetings, do you hear much talk about the schools or the school system around here?

18. What kinds of things do you hear said?

19. Besides P.T.A. or school board meetings, where are you most likely to hear things about schools discussed?

IV. Personal information

20. What is your occupation?

21. Do you work outside of this community?

    (If yes) Where is that?

22. Where did you receive your education?

    (If college mentioned, ascertain schools, degrees, major fields of study.)

23. How long have you lived in this school district?

    (If not all of life) Where did you live before coming here?

24. Do you have children?

    (If yes) Would you mind telling me their ages?

25. Would you mind telling me your age?

    (If no response, interviewer estimate.)

26. What groups and associations do you belong to, for example, fraternal, professional, civic, social, or religious groups?

27. Do you hold any offices in any of these?

28. Would you mind telling me your political party affiliation?

29. Have you ever held any public office in this community or in any other place where you have lived?

V. Community actives

In every community some individuals have more influence in community affairs than others and we'd like to find out who are the most important leaders here. We'd like you to think of influential people in the community in general, but not those in the school administration or presently on the board. Could you name some persons whom you feel to be influential in this community? This information will be kept strictly confidential.

RANK	NAME	IDENTIFICATION
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
	6.	
	7.	
	8.	
	9.	
	10.	

Among those you have named, how would you rank them in terms of their influence?

Of the names you have listed, whom do you consider to have the greatest influence in determining what happens in educational affairs?

VI. Miscellaneous

30. Are there any other things you'd like to mention about school or community affairs around here?

INTERVIEWER COMMENTS:

SUPERINTENDENT RE-INTERVIEWS

I. Educational programs

1. Language Program

   What languages do you teach in the district?

   In what grades?

   When was the language program instituted?

   Where did the main impetus for the language program come from?

2. New Mathematics

   Do you have a "new mathematics" curriculum?

   How long have you had the "new math" in the curriculum?

   Where did the impetus for the revision of the math curriculum come from?

3. Music Program

   Can you give me a brief description of the district's music program?

4. Does the district have a school lunch program?

5. Are there any other particularly notable features to the district's academic program?

6. How many schools are there in the district?

   K - 6

   K - 8

   JHS

7. What is the total enrollment?

8. What is the average class size?

II. Teaching staff

9. How many full-time teachers?

10. How many teachers with temporary certificates?

11. What is the average staff turnover per year?

12. Can you tell us the proportion of teaching staff who have been in the district

    a. 5 years

    b. 10 years

    c. 20 years

13. Do you experience any particular problems recruiting new teachers?

14. What is the teacher salary scale in the district?

III. Demography

15. What is your estimate of the total population of the district?

16. Are any particular shifts in district population under way?

17. How many parochial elementary schools are operating in the district?

18. Can you tell me the parochial school elementary enrollment?

IV. Board members

Name of board member

   a. occupation

   b. education - highest grade completed

   c. location of work place

   d. number of children

   e. number of children in district schools

   f. length of service on board

   g. comments

19. Who would you say is your most effective board member?

19a. Why do you say that?

19b. Was he effective immediately upon his election to the board?

20. How are board members nominated in the district?

21. Do you think a member's length of service on the board is related to his effectiveness as a board member?

22. What kind of introduction to board work do you provide a new board member?

23. What introduction to board work do members of the board provide a new board member?

V. Decision-making

24. How are committees used in the work of this board?

24a. Do you sit with all committees?

24b. Are different staff members permanently assigned to various committees?

25. How often does the board meet between board meetings?

26. Is there anything about decision-making in the district you can mention that is not apparent on the surface?

27. What would you say are the superintendent's principal obligations to the board?

VI. Life safety code: could you briefly tell us what you and the board did in response to the life safety code issue?

APPENDIX D

DIVISION OF LABOR INSTRUMENTS

(These instruments adapted from Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason, and Alexander McEachern, Exploration in Role Analysis: Studies of the School Superintendency Role (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1958), with permission of the publisher.)

DIVISION OF LABOR: FORM I (IDEAL)

We are grateful to you for the time you have given us. There is one further task we would like to ask of you.

WOULD YOU PLEASE INDICATE ON THE PAGES THAT FOLLOW WHAT YOU WOULD CONSIDER TO BE AN IDEAL ARRANGEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE SCHOOL BOARD?

PLEASE SELECT FROM AMONG THE ITEMS THE ONE WHICH YOU FEEL WOULD BE THE BEST ARRANGEMENT FOR THIS SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND THEN MARK IT WITH A CHECK OR A CIRCLE.

We will leave this form, along with a stamped, addressed envelope, so that you can put it in the mail at your convenience within the next few days.

Again we express sincere thanks, and we assure you that your answers to all questions will be kept strictly confidential and the result of the study will not be publicly identified with you or the district.

Co-operative Educational Research Project
Center for Metropolitan Studies
Northwestern University
1818 Sheridan Road
Evanston, Illinois

DIVISION OF LABOR

INTERVIEW #________________

1. When a new teacher is to be hired

(4) The school board should act solely on the nomination of the administration.

(3) The school board should usually act on the nomination of the administration, but sometimes should take a hand in interviewing candidates.

(2) The school board or one of its committees should usually do the interviewing and selecting, although it should give some consideration to the recommendations of the administration.

(1) The school board or one of its committees should always interview the candidates and select the best one.

(X) Other (please explain).

2. If a new building is needed

(4) The school board should expect the administration to recommend a specific building program.

(3) The school board should expect the administration to take the lead in drawing up a specific program in consultation with the school board.

(2) The school board should form its own building committee which should take the lead in drawing up a building program in consultation with the administration.

(1) The school board should form its own building committee to draw up a building program on its own.

(X) Other (please explain).

3. When a new textbook is needed

(4) The school board should always accept the recommendations of the administration in choosing a textbook.

(3) The administration should take the initiative in choosing textbooks, but the school board should also read several textbooks and sometimes choose one not recommended by the administration.

(2) The school board or one of its subcommittees should take the initiative, reading several different textbooks and selecting the best one in consultation with the administration.

(1) The school board or one of its committees should take the initiative, reading several textbooks and selecting the best one on its own.

(X) Other (please explain).

4. On the budget

(5) The administration should draw up the budget for board approval.

(4) The administration should draw up the budget in consultation with a board committee.

(3) The administration should draw up the budget in consultation with the board president.

(2) A board committee should draw up the budget.

(1) The board as a whole should draw up the budget.

(X) Other (please explain).

5. On instructional policy

(4) The administration should make all of the decisions on its own.

(3) The administration should make recommendations in consultation with the school board and the school board should act on them.

(2) The school board should formulate instructional policy in consultation with the administration, and the administration should be directed to carry this out.

(1) The school committee should formulate instructional policy on its own.

(X) Other (please explain).

6. On public relations

(4) The administration should be responsible for and should administer the public relations program.

(3) The administration should formulate a public relations program in consultation with the school board, and the administration should administer the program.

(2) The school board should formulate a public relations program and the administration should administer the program.

(1) The school board should be responsible for and should administer the public relations program.

(X) Other (please explain).

7. How should teachers' grievances be handled?

(4) Teachers should always bring their grievances to the school board through the administration.

(3) Teachers should usually bring their grievances to the school board through the administration.

(2) Teachers should usually bring their grievances directly to the school board members.

(1) Teachers should always bring their grievances directly to the school board members.

(X) Other (please explain).

8. Who should handle relationships with community groups that wish to use pupils for their own purposes? (e.g. use of school band, soliciting funds for charities, making posters, etc.).

(4) They should be handled entirely by the administration.

(3) They should be handled largely by the administration.

(2) They should be handled largely by the school board.

(1) They should be handled entirely by the school board.

(X) Other (please explain).

9. When a community organization wishes to use school property, the request:

(4) Should be handled at the adminstration's discretion.

(3) Should be acted upon by the administration under policy approved by the school board.

(2) Should usually be presented to the school board and acted upon by the school board.

(1) Should always be presented to the school board and acted upon by the school board.

(X) Other (please explain).

10. Who should be responsible for and supervise the maintenance necessary to keep the school plant in good operating condition?

    (4) This should be entirely the responsibility of the administration.

    (3) This should be largely the responsibility of the administration.

    (2) This should be largely the responsibility of the school board.

    (1) This should be entirely the responsibility of the school board.

    (X) Other (please explain).

11. Who should be responsible for the child attendance regulations?

    (4) This should be entirely the responsibility of the administration.

    (3) This should be largely the responsibility of the administration.

    (2) This should be largely the responsibility of the school board.

    (1) This should be entirely the responsibility of the school board.

    (X) Other (please explain).

12. Who should make recommendations for increases in salaries of school system employees?

    (4) The administration should make all such recommendations.

    (3) The administration should make most such recommendations.

    (2) School board members should make most such recommendations.

    (1) School board members should make all such recommendations.

    (X) Other (please explain).

13. Who should initiate policy matters?

    (4) The administration should initiate all policy matters.

    (3) The administration should initiate most policy matters.

    (2) The school board should initiate most policy matters.

    (1) The school board should initiate all policy matters.

    (X) Other (please explain).

DIVISION OF LABOR: FORM P (PERCEIVED)

INTERVIEW # ________

1. When a new teacher is to be hired

   (4) The school board acts solely on the nomination of the administration.

   (3) The school board usually acts on the nomination of the administration but sometimes takes a hand in interviewing candidates.

   (2) The school board or one of its committees usually does the interviewing and selecting, although it gives some consideration to the recommendations of the administration.

   (1) The school board or one of its committees always interviews the candidates and selects the best one.

   (X) Other (please explain).

2. If a new building is needed

   (4) The school board expects the administration to recommend a specific building program.

   (3) The school board expects the administration to take the lead in drawing up a specific program in consultation with the board.

   (2) The school board has its own building committee which takes the lead in drawing up a building program in consultation with the administration.

   (1) The school board has its own building committee draw up a building program on its own.

   (X) Other (please explain).

3. When a new textbook is needed

   (4) The school board always accepts the recommendations of the administration in choosing a textbook.

   (3) The administration takes the initiative in choosing textbooks, but the school board also reads several textbooks and may sometimes make recommendations of its own.

(2) The school board or one of its committees takes the initiative, reading several different textbooks and selecting the best one in consultation with the administration.

(1) The school board or one of its committees takes the initiative, reading several textbooks and selecting the best one on its own.

(X) Other (please explain).

4. On the budget

(5) The administration draws up the budget for board approval.

(4) The administration draws up the budget in consultation with a board committee.

(3) The administration draws up the budget in consultation with the board president.

(2) A board committee draws up the budget.

(1) The board as a whole draws up the budget.

(X) Other (please explain).

5. On instructional policy

(4) The administration makes all of the decisions on its own.

(3) The administration makes recommendations in consultation with the school board, and the board acts on them.

(2) The school board formulates instructional policy in consultation with the administration, and the administration is directed to carry this out.

(1) The school board formulates instructional policy on its own.

(X) Other (please explain).

6. On public relations

(4) The administration is responsible for and administers the public relations program.

(3) The administration formulates a public relations program in consultation with the school board, and the administration administers the program.

(2) The school board formulates a public relations program and the administration administers the program.

(1) The school board is responsible for and administers the public relations program.

(X) Other (please explain).

7. How are teachers' grievances handled?

(4) Teachers always bring their grievances to the school board through the administration.

(3) Teachers usually bring their grievances to the school board through the administration.

(2) Teachers usually bring their grievances directly to the school board members.

(1) Teachers always bring their grievances directly to the school board members.

(X) Other (please explain).

8. Who handles relationships with community groups that wish to use pupils for their own purposes? (e.g. use of school band, soliciting funds for charities, making posters, etc.)

(4) They are handled entirely by the administration.

(3) They are handled largely by the administration.

(2) They are handled largely by the school board.

(1) They are handled entirely by the school board.

(X) Other (please explain).

9. When a community organization wishes to use school property, the request:

(4) Is handled at the administration's discretion.

(3) Is acted upon by the administration under policy approved by the school board.

(2) Is usually presented to the school board and acted upon by the school board.

(1) Is always presented to the school board and acted upon by the school board.

(X) Other (please explain).

10. Who is responsible for and supervises the maintenance necessary to keep the school plant in good operating condition?

(4) This is entirely the responsibility of the administration.

(3) This is largely the responsibility of the administration.

(2) This is largely the responsibility of the school board.

(1) This is entirely the responsibility of the school board.

(X) Other (please explain).

11. Who is responsible for the child attendance regulations?

(4) This is entirely the responsibility of the administration.

(3) This is largely the responsibility of the administration.

(2) This is largely the responsibility of the school board.

(1) This is entirely the responsibility of the school board.

(X) Other (please explain).

12. Who makes recommendations for increases in salaries of school system employees?

(4) The administration makes all such recommendations.

(3) The administration makes most such recommendations.

(2) School board members make most such recommendations.

(1) School board members make all such recommendations.

(X) Other (please explain).

13. Who initiates policy matters?

(4) The administration initiates all policy matters.

(3) The administration initiates most policy matters.

(2) The school board initiates most policy matters.

(1) The school board initiates all policy matters.

(X) Other (please explain).

APPENDIX E

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY PRESS AND CONTENT CATEGORIES FOR MEETING ANALYSIS

The purposes of this content analysis of the community press were basically four-fold: identification of community influentials in the educational field; identification of major educational issues discussed in the community during the past five years; substantiation of "objective facts" about the school system; and, provision of a summary of and feel for the recent history of the community with respect to educational affairs. The effort was more successful with respect to the last three than with respect to the first.

The shortcomings of this kind of analysis are obvious and widely understood. The most important is that any study of the community through the press is more a study of the press itself than it is of the community. While the characteristics of the community press are not unimportant, they are peripheral to the major purposes of the present research. Reflection on the content of the press suggests that it is dependent chiefly on decisions rooted in institutional considerations that may or may not be related to the character of the community itself. The coverage of local educational news may depend, for example, on decisions taken by the publisher and editor of the paper, by lay-out and rewrite men, and by reporters themselves. These decisions may, in turn, be dependent on such matters as personal whim and prejudice; estimates, whether accurate or inaccurate, of community demand; resources in money, space, and time available to the people responsible for publication. It is apparent that local educational news is not compelling in the sense that some kinds of national and international news are compelling on the editors of urban dailies. Therefore, what we glean from the press about the local educational system must be used with caution, for it cannot be taken as an accurate reflection of any one single thing. While decisions about newspaper coverage are in themselves significant objects for social science analysis, this analysis lies beyond the scope of the study we are undertaking here. Rather than attempt to understand either the suburban press or particular newspapers, we must be content with something more modest, namely, the reading of the evidence with due regard for its inherent limitations.

A second difficulty lies in devising meaningful units of measurement. This problem is more technical than the one discussed in the preceding paragraph, but the difficulties and shortcomings with content analysis are commonly discussed and understood. They involve such matters as the problem of measuring quality and intensity of message and the question whether units can be devised so as to make comparative measurement meaningful. For these reasons we will compare quantitative results only by gross units and not undertake sophisticated statistical analysis.

Collection of Data.--The newspapers were read so as to collect a record of every piece of school news reported and every comment on school affairs published in the paper during the period July 1, 1960, to July 1, 1965. Collection was confined, however, to items having to do with the elementary school district under study, i.e., excluding references to the high school district or other school districts in the surrounding area. The only intentional exclusions made, so far as the test districts were concerned, were items reporting activities in individual classrooms, such as field trips, class projects, etc., and "social items" referring to the activities of individual school Parent Teacher Associations. Otherwise, the objective was to make a record of all pieces of school news. Each piece was recorded on a separate page and these pages were numbered, seriatim, in chronological order. The person responsible for the collection of data was instructed to capture the principal content of the piece and to record all names appearing in it.

Units of Analysis.--Each of these records was then coded according to two units of analysis which we have called "Items" and "Themes." Each item is a whole, physically differentiated piece, regardless of how many subject-matters it may deal with. Items are coded by kind into three categories: articles, marked with a lower-case "a;" letters, marked with a lower-case "l;" and editorials, marked with a lower-case "e." Themes are subject-matter units, coded by the content categories discussed in the next paragraph. Each item may contain one or several themes, and individual record sheets are thus either single or multiple coded according to the number of themes contained in the particular item recorded. Themes are coded by Roman numerals in the seven categories mentioned below.

Content Categories.--Themes were coded by content categories after the collection of data. This coding required a certain amount of judgment on the part of the coder. Content categories used for the press analysis were also those used in meeting observations, with the addition of a seventh category for school elections, a subject usually coded under categories V and VI in board observations. These categories, with examples of typical items, were as follows:

I. Personnel: includes teacher recruitment, appointments, resignations, and dismissals; teacher pay scales; merit pay questions; assignment of teaching duties; teacher orientation and institute programs; recruitment, assignment, and compensation of non-teaching staff.

II. Curriculum: includes such matters as course content, textbook adoptions, curriculum innovation, reports on teaching program, school calendar, summer session programs, special education, and enrollments.

III. School-community relations: includes such items as general community interest in and participation in educational affairs, activities, and formation of school groups, etc.

IV. Facilities: includes such matters as building plans, equipment, classroom crowding, enrollment when reported with specific reference to the adequacy of physical facilities, condition of buildings and grounds, safety matters, contracts for school repair, alteration, and construction.

V. Finance: includes such items as budget, tax rate, bond issues, revenue from non-tax sources, cost of education, payment of bills.

VI. Administration: includes such things as organization of school board committees, etc. This tends, to some degree, to be a residual category which has found rather little use.

VII. School elections (used in press analysis only): news about school board elections and bond and tax referenda, nomination of candidates, organization of caucus, appeals for caucus sponsorship, and campaign materials themselves, including letters to editors opposing or supporting either candidates or referendum measures.